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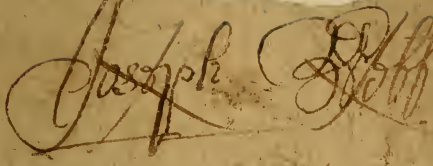

Joseph Swett
his Book of the Saving
and Doing my. (1663)

price: 1:

NON-CONFORMITY,

WITHOUT

CONTROVERSIE,

FROM Rom. *Chap.* 12. *Ver.* 2.

SHEWING,

That it is every Christian's Duty,
To be a *NONCONFORMIST*
to this World.

By *BENJAMIN BAXTER,*
Preacher of the Gospel.

Jer. 15. 19.
Let them return unto thee, but return thou not unto them.

John 15. 19.
You are not of the world, I have chosen you out of the World.

LONDON,
Printed by *A. M.* for *Tho. Parkhurk,* and are to be sold by *Sampson Evans* Bookseller at *Worcester,* 1670.

CONTROVERSIE.

READER,

TAke not occasion by the Title of this Book, either of a pleasing or displeasing Mistake. It speaketh not at all against any *Conformity* to the lawful Commands of lawful Governours, in things Civil or Ecclesiastical; but only against a Conformity to the Vices of the World: Which should be no offence to any who renounceth not his Baptism, in which we all renounce the

World, with the *pomps and vanities thereof*, and all the *sinful lusts of the flesh*; promising *that we will not follow or be led by them.* He understandeth nothing of Christianity, who understandeth not the enmity of the World, to a life of sincere Holiness; and how inconsistent the Love of the World is to the Love of God; and how much the Life and Death of Christ were intended and fitted, to mortifie our earthly Minds and Affections, and to bring us to a holy contempt of the Pleasures, and Profits, and

Honours

Honours of the World; and that it is the office of our Faith, to be our victory over the World; and all this, in the imitation and strength of Him, who hath heartned us to the warr, with this Encouragement, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* They that are not Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is not their Belly, who glory not in their shame, and mind not earthly things, while they are *named* Christians; are crucified to the world, and the world to them, by the cross of Christ;

and

and their Political converſatio
is in Heaven. This Subject you
will find handled in this Diſ-
courſe, by the Reverend *Au-*
thor, (my very dear and wor-
thy Friend) with great plain-
neſs and perſpicuity, in a ſtile
neither obſcure, dull, nor tedi-
ous; and in a moſt *natural and*
congruous Method (in which re-
ſpect all the Sermons that ever
I heard from him, (whereof
ſome were above thirty years
ago) did excel other men's).
The Lord make it effectually
ſerviceable to his Ends, who
gave himſelf for our ſins, tha
h

he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father. To whom be glory for ever. Amen. *Gal.* 1. 4, 5.

Sept. 14. 1668.

Ri. Baxter.

To the Reader.

[illegible] might deliver us from this [illegible] present evil world, according [illegible] the will of God, and our Father. To whom be glory for ever. Amen. Gal. 1. 4, 5.

[illegible]

In Dunia.

To the Vertuous and his much Honoured Cousins Mrs. *Grace Allen*, Wife to Mr. *William Allen*, Merchant: Mrs. *Sarah Paunsfoot*, Wife to Mr. *Robert Paunsfoot*: Mrs. *Hester Brear-cliff*, Wife to Mr. *Thomas Brear-cliff*, Merchants all of the City of *LONDON*.

Much Honoured Cousins,

IT is not any Ambition to appear in Print, that hath induced me to this Undertaking; Only I could not handsomly decline the Dedication of this Posthumous Piece, and Presenting it to your Hands, who have so clear and unquestionable a Right to it, as will appear by the Sequel. I presume you are not ignorant, that it was really intended and designed for you by the Reverend Author, (now at Rest with the Lord) your dear Brother and mine; Who, (had he not been prevented by Death) had done it with his own Hand: but perceiving the

Printing of this Book procrastinated beyond his Expectation, and being dayly sensible of his near approaching and long expected Change, it was his desire that I would undertake it in his behalf; and indeed it was one of the last requests he made to me before he left the World. I doubt not then, but what I have done herein, will be well construed and kindly accepted, when it is done in pursuance of so honest a Design, & to gratifie the just & reasonable Desire of so near and dear a Relation, who (on his Death-bed) bequeath'd this Legacy as a Testimony of his unfeigned Brotherly-Love, and Memorial of his real Gratitude to you his dear Dear Sisters, who had not been forgetful of him, but oft relieved and refreshed him by your Kind and Christian-like Visits, in his Low and Languishing Condition.

As for the Subject of the following Discourse, You will easily grant, it is very seasonable and needful as for all Times, so especially these last and worst Times, wherein Worldliness so much prevails & gets ground of Godliness even in the Hearts and Lives of those that call themselves Christians, *whereas did they truly answer the Name they bear, what would it speak else, but thei*

Confor

Conformity to Christ, and not to the World. The Words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7. 29. 30, 31. *deserve seriously to be taken, and laid to heart by every Christian: Where, to take us off the extreams of* Joy *and* Sorrow *in the Possessing, or Parting with Earthly Relations, and Worldly Comforts, he tells us,* The fashion of this World passeth away: *and yet notwithstanding, how do we find by Woful Experience, the Hearts of too many drawn away and enticed through the Predominancy of* Worldly Lusts, *that this is their chiefest study how to keep in with the World by Fashioning and Conforming the dayly Actions of their Lives according to the Rules and Patterns of it? And herein, how do they seek to out-vye and out-strip each other with so great Emulation and Contention (when their Lives and the World are hastning to an end) as if it were their highest Ambition to live and dye the World's Favorites? But, certainly if there were a through and sound Belief of a Life and World to come, after this present frail and transitory State of all things here below, how would it turn the Stream and Current of Mens Thoughts and Affections, and have a powerful Influence on their Lives and Con-*

versations, to make them more Godly, & less Worldly; and from this very Consideration (2 Pet. 3. 11.) *the Apostle argues strongly for a Holy and Godly Conversation, and not a Worldly Conformity. But our* Saviour *himself hath foretold us* (*and therefore we may and must believe it*) *that towards the end of the World it will be a rare thing to find true Faith,* (Luk. 18. 8.) *that Victorious Grace which, St.* John *tells us,* (1 Joh. 5. 4.) *overcometh the World and the Lusts thereof.*

But (*dear Cousins*) *I am perswaded better things of you, and such as accompany Salvation. You have been happy above many, in respect of your Education, having been acquainted with Sound Principles of Godliness from your tender years, through the Care and Diligence of your Religious Parents. And although there are too many to be found in these times, between whose Principles and Practices there is little or no Conformity, but the one is rather a plain Confutation of the other; I hope you will never be found in that number: for that precious Seed of good Principles which was sown in your Minority, was not* (*it seems*) *burned and lost, but hath* (*through Gods*

Blessing

Blessing with a continual watering) *budded and brought forth seasonable and wholesom Fruit for the Comfort and Refreshing of others, which hath occasioned* (*no doubt*) *the Thanks-giving of many to God on your behalf. And if God hath given you,* (*with a large and plentiful Estate*) *a large Heart and open Hand to do good, it is a double Blessing, and lays a double Obligation upon you to be thankful.*

Now because the best Christians need dayly Monitors to warn them of Dangers, and to awaken them to Duty and the continual Exercise of their Graces; give me leave as a faithful Friend to beseech you to keep in remembrance, and seriously to ponder what the Apostle writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 6. 17. 18, 19.) *The more Splendid your outward Condition is, the greater is the Danger you are exposed unto, from the Temptations of a Smiling & Flattering World, which being masked & veiled, are not easily known and discovered; which if they were, would more easily be resisted, and were nothing so dangerous. They that by Experience know what a tempting thing* Worldly Grandeur *is, and have any acquaintance with their own hearts, how apt they are to*

be

be taken with it, cannot but acknowledg, it is none of the easiest Points of that difficult Duty of Christian Self-denial, for those that have arrived at the Haven of Worldly hopes, to keep their Hearts humble from being lifted up with Self-admiring thoughts, when their outward Greatness and Splendor invites others to applaud and admire them. And indeed it will put the Faith *of Christians to the greatest Stress, and prove not only the Truth but the Strength thereof, when, in the midst of Worldly Enjoyments, they can look above them to higher and better; and in the midst of Worldly Greatness, can live above it in the Soul-ravishing View of Heavenly Glory. It must needs be then a Mercy worth the asking, and a Lesson worth the learning, to have our Hearts loosed from all outward Comforts before Hand, and to leave and part with them in affection, before we are called to part with them indeed, (seeing there will be a time of parting and we enjoy them on no other, but parting-terms) and then, whensoever they are taken from us, or we from them, the trouble of partin, will not be great. But to detain you no longer with an Epistle; As concerning the* Author *of the ensuing Sermons, it*

is

is needless for me to write any thing to you who were so nearly related and so familiarly acquainted with him, to whom (I doubt not) his Memory is and will be precious; and that true Love, and due esteem you always had for his publick and profitable Labours is a sufficient Commendation of this Practical Piece to your Serious Perusal which I hope and heartily wish (through the Blessing of God) may prove advantagious to preserve you from Worldliness, and for the promoting the power of Godliness in your Hearts and Lives, that you may dayly strive after a nearer and closer Conformity to Christ your Heavenly Pattern in all his imitable Graces; then shall you have no cause to repent the reading, but rejoyce and bless God, that by his good Providence it is brought forth to publick View, wherein the Author, *(though dead) yet speaketh.*

Your most Affectionate Kinsman
in any Service of Christian
Love to be commanded,

STEPH. BAXTER.

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A NON-CONFORMITY Commanded and Commended.

Rom. 12. v. 2.

And be not conformed to this world.

THE words considered in themselves, are either words of *Counsel*, issuing from the Apostle's Wisdom; or words of *...ution*, issuing from the Apostle's Care ...nd Love; or words of *Command*, issuing from the Apostle's Authority: *Be not ...nformed to this world.*

We will consider them as a prohibitive precept, wherein we have

1. The Act forbidden, and that is *Conformity.*

2. The Object to which it hath relation, and that is, *to this world.*

And mark, it's said, to *this World*, τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, not to *the* world, but to *this* world. The *Greek* word taken strictly, signifies the *present Age of the world*; so as if the Apostle should say, *Be not conformed to this Age*; intimating, that it was an Age wherein Sin and Corruption did more abound. But we shall take it more largely; so, *this World*, as distinguished from another World. There is the World that now is, and the World that is to come. It's said of *Demas*, That *he embraced this present world.* So the thing forbidden, is not being in the world, nor using of the world, nor all converse with the men of *this world*; but it is *conformity to this world* that is forbid.

There are two great things the Scripture forbids us, in relation to the world:

1. Affecting of it, *Love not the world*
2. Imitating of it, and conforming to it; so here, *Be not conformed to this world.*

Doct. *It is the duty of Christians to* Non-conformists *to this world.*

In handling of it, we shall speak to four things:

1. The *Explication.*
2. The *Confirmation.*
3. The *Vindication.*
4. The *Application.*

1. For *Explication*; so two things come to be opened:

I. What is meant by *the world* to which Christians are not to *conform.*

II. What is meant by being a *Non-Conformist* to *this world.*

I. What is meant by *the world* that Christians are not to *conform* to. To let pass the several acceptions of the *world* in Scripture, It may be understood either of the Frame or Family of the World.

1. For the Frame; so for what the world consists of; so for the Heavens and Earth, and the things contained in them, Heb. 1. 2. *By whom also he made the world.* So it is not here understood.

2. The Family of the world; so the *world* is taken for the persons that inhabit this lower world, the Earth: and so in Scripture, for the wicked of the world,

1 *Joh.* 5. 19. *The world lieth in wickedneſs.* Where by the *world* is not underſtood the Frame, but the Family and men of the world; who by a ſpecial appellation in Scripture are ſtiled *the men of the world*, Pſal 17. 14. and the *children of this world*, Luke 16. 8.

And the reaſons why they are called the world, are theſe.

1. The worſt are the moſt of the world, they take up moſt room in the world; the Godly are a little Flock. Who can number the duſt of Atheiſts, Swearers, Drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, Covetous, Prophane? How few are thoſe that fear an Oath, to thoſe that ſwear? How few are thoſe that ſanctifie a Sabbath, to thoſe that prophane it? How few are thoſe that call upon the Name of the Lord, to thoſe that blaſpheme his Name? How few are thoſe that fear God, to thoſe that fear him not?

2. The worſt are for the moſt part the greateſt of the world, they are the moſt flouriſhing part of, and people in the world; and they are the world's own-lings, whom the world loves, as our Saviour ſaith, *The world will love its own*

They are the Diamonds of the world, and the godly are but the Pebbles, They are the persons in esteem, when the godly are accounted the περικαθάρματα, off-scowring of the world. They are the men that have most worldly wisdom, most worldly wealth, most worldly honour, and therefore called the world.

3. The worst are called the world in regard of affection; they love the world, and the things of the world. They savour the things of the world, and savour of the world; they smell of the world, as *Esau*'s garments did of the Field. The saying is, *Unum quodque illud est quod amat*; every thing is that it loves. Affections work a change, especially that of love, which in a manner changes one into the person or thing loved. Hence it is the worst are called the world.

4. The worst are called the world, in respect of Conversation; they are *carnali conversatione Mundo dediti*, as an Expositor saith, they are wholly addicted to, and given up to the world; the world is the Principle from which, and the End for which they act; they rise no higher in their conversation, than the world; their

converſation is not in Heaven; they do all carnally; ſo they eat, and ſo they drink; ſo they live, and ſo they dye; and therefore called the world.

5. The worſt are called the world, Becauſe they are all for the world; for the Riches, and Pleaſures, and Profits, and Vanities of this preſent world. If they can have but thoſe things, they care for no more. They make the world their reſt; they muſt have the things of the world, or elſe they dye. Give them the things of the world, and it ſufficeth. The things of another world, they mind not, they deſire not, they ſeek not after. What they look after and covet, lies below. As the Duke of *Alva*, when he was asked by the King of *France*, Whether he had ſeen a great Eclipſe that was of the Sun? Replied, That he had ſo much to do on Earth, that he could not have while to look up to Heaven. So it is with theſe; a Portion in this life, and in this world, is the higheſt in their eſteem; as that prophane Duke of *Burbon* ſaid, He preferr'd his part in *Paris*, before his part in *Paradice*. And upon this account the worſt are called the world; and this is that world that is chiefly

chiefly meant, to which Christians are to be *Non-conformists.*

So much for the first.

II. Consider, What it is to be a *Non-formist* to the world: so, in handling that, we shall do two things:

1. Shew you wherein *Conformity* to the world stands.

2. Wherein *Nonconformity* stands; and so shall shew you what it is to be a *Conformist* and a *Nonconformist* to this world.

The words in the Original are μη συσχηματιζεσθε, which *Beza* renders the *Configuremini*, Be not *configured* to the world. Some render them (and so the *Vulgar*), *Nolite conformari*, *Be not conformed*, as here in the Text. The words may be rendered, Be not *figured* or *fashioned* according to this world, 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. *Not fashioning your selves*, &c. where the word is the same in the Original, with that in the Text. Having done this, I now come to shew wherein

1. *Conformity* to the world stands. *Conformity* supposeth and implies a pattern to which one doth *conform.* What is *Conformity* but a walking or

working by a Rule or Pattern, out of a ſtudy and deſire to imitate it? So *conformity* to Chriſt ſtands in the imitating and following the Pattern that Chriſt hath left us, and writing after the Copy he hath given us; treading in his ſteps, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. *Leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.* So conformity to the world ſtands in treading in the world's ſteps, writing after the world's Copy, following the world's example. The world hath its *Tables*, which it hangs forth for a pattern of Conformity to others. It hath its Samplers, wherein is a deſcription of its actions, for the imitation of others. There is a Scheme and Figure of the world, according to which it would have all to faſhion themſelves. It knows that man is ζῶον μιμητικον, a Creature that is apt to imitate, who will be working according to ſome Pattern or other; and therefore hath its Patterns of all ſorts, which it hangs forth to gain his Conformity. So then there are two things that make up conformity to the world, and that make a man a *Conformiſt* to the world.

1. *Approbation.*
2. *Imitation.*

1. *Ap-*

1. *Approbation*; when a man in his judgment approves of the world's Principles and Practises, concluding that best that the most of the world say and do; That the world's way of worshipping God, is the best way; That the world's way to Heaven is the easiest way, *and therefore to be chosen.*

2. *Imitation:* This follows upon *Approbation:* He likes the Copy, and therefore resolves to write after it. He likes the Pattern, and resolves to imitate it. As it is in writing, we first look on it, and like the Hand-writing, and then there is a taking of Pen in hand to write like it. In a word, Conforming to the World stands in this, When a man is inwardly and outwardly, not what God, but the world would have him to be. When a man judgeth as the world judgeth, thinks as the world thinks, speaks as the world speaks, acts as the world acts, loveth as the world loveth, delights as the world delights, hates as the world hates. When a man's carriage and disposition is the the same with the men of the world; when a man maketh the rule of his life to be the sinful Manners, Customs, and Examples

amples of the world, and salves all with worldly distinctions and limitations.

II. What *Nonconformity* to the World is, and what it is to be a *Nonconformist* to the World.

Nonconformity to the World consists of these things:

1. A *Nonconformity* to the World in *Judgment*. He that is a *Nonconformist* to the world, must judg of things otherways than the world doth. The world calls evil good, and good evil; the world puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; the world thinks the ways of God unequal, the service of God burthensome, the Servants of God fools, the Ministers of God illiterate Dunces, Religion it self irrational: It thinks Holiness singularity; and strictness and precisenes in the ways of God, to be foolish scrupulosities. It thinks great sins little ones, and little sins to be none at all. It thinks Repentance and Salvation to be the easiest things in the world, and that the way to Heaven is not so hard as the Scripture makes it. What a low opinion hath the world of sin, judging it not to be so evil as it is?

What

What a low opinion hath the world of Grace, thinking it not to be so excellent as it is? What a low opinion hath the World of Christ, thinking him not to be so necessary, amiable, and desirable, as he is? What a low opinion hath the world of Heavenly things, and the great things of Eternity, thinking them not to be of that everlasting concernment as they are? What a low opinion have they of the Saints of God, thinking them not to be so excellent and useful as they are? What a low opinion have they of Religious Duties and Ordinances, thinking them not to be so necessary, sweet, and heavenly, as they are? So this is the first thing, Wherein a Christian is to be a *Nonconformist* to this World, In point of *Judgment*. He must judg of things otherways than the World judgeth.

2. A Christian must be a *Nonconformist* to the World, in respect of *Affection*. He must have his Affections set upon higher objects than those things the affections of worldly men are set upon; he must be unlike the world in his love, desires, and delight. The World loves nothing but what is like it self; none but those in whom

it

it espieth its own conditions and dispositions; he must be unlike the world in his sorrow, grief, and mourning, which is for worldly crosses, not for sin; it mourns more for the Effect, than the Cause. The Affections of the World run with a byas towards the World; they are all edged and pointed downwards; they always face some Worldly Object. And in this particular a Christian is to be a *Nonconformist* to the World.

3. A Christian must be a *Nonconformist* to the World in respect of *Practice*. A Christian must not do as the World doth; he must not conform to the World in respect of its

{ *Rules*,
{ *Examples*.

He must not walk by the *Rules* the World walks by: He must not imitate the same Patterns: the life of a Christian must be a life ordered by the *Rules* and *Examples* of the Word, not of the World. His Principles from which he acts, his Rules and Precepts by which he acts, and his Ends for which he acts, must be higher than the World.

And thus much for the *Explication*.

II. For

II. For the *Confirmation* of the truth of the Doctrine: So consider the grounds and reasons, Why Christians must be *Nonconformists* to the World.

First, They are to be *Nonconformists* to the world in respect of their *Calling*. A Christian's Calling, and his Conformity to the world, cannot consist nor stand together. To make this out, consider

1. What a Christian is called from.
2. What a Christian is called to.

1. What a Christian is called from. He is called from the world, he is called out of the world; and so he is called from a conformity to the world: John 15. 19. *I have chosen you out of the world.* The Church is described to be a company of faithful ones, chosen and called out of the world. Now, What is this calling out of the world? It is not calling them from living in the world. It is not calling them from using of the world; it is not calling them from all conversing with the world; but it is a calling them from conforming to the world, Rev. 18. 4. *Come out of her my people*; (*i. e.*) Have nothing to do with *Babylon's* Manners, and sinful Customs, and corrupt Forms of Worship.

2. Con-

2. Consider what Christians are called to, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. they are said to be called to *Glory* and *Vertue*. Christians are called to Holiness and Happiness. And upon this account he must not be a Conformist to this world.

1. He is called to Holiness; 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *Be ye holy*. Now Holiness consisteth not with conforming to the world; the world is unclean, impure, unholy; 1 *Joh.* 5. 19. *The world lieth in wickedness*; it lies like a Beast in its own dung and filth. Conforming to the world, is being like the world, and bearing the image of the world; and so it is to bear the image of that that is unholy and unclean. A Christian is called to bear another image; he is called to be like God. But none can bear the Image of God, and the Image of the world too. God is infinitely holy; and he that will be like to a holy God, must be unlike an unholy world: *Jam.* 1. 27. it is there made one part of that Religion that is said to be pure and undefiled, *For a man to keep himself unspotted of the world*: which shews that the world is a bespotting and defiling thing. 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. we read of the pollutions of the world. If you look

look upon that Scheam and Figure of the world that St. *John* hath drawn, 1 *Joh.* 2. 16. you will find, whatever is in the world, is all luſt. So *Tit.* 2, 12. we read of worldly luſts. And if you will ſee what the way, and courſe, and practice of the world is, you have it in 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. exceſs of Riot, Drunkenneſs, Revelling, *&c.* So then it cannot be, that a Chriſtian's being called to holineſs, can conſiſt with a conforming to this world.

2. Chriſtians are called to Glory. As to Holineſs, ſo to Happineſs. Now calling to glory, and conforming to the world, cannot ſtand together. *Prov.* 15. 24. *The way of life is above to the wiſe.* That way that leads to glory, lyes above the world. Thoſe Principles from which a man acts, thoſe Rules by which a man acts, and thoſe Ends for which a man acts, that acts for Heaven, and ſeeks for Glory and Immortality, are all higher Principles, Rules, and Ends, than thoſe of the world, and far above them. The world's way will never bring a man to glory; it may bring a man to worldly Honour and Preferment, but will never mount a man to the enjoyment of the things of that world

world that is to come. The world hath kept many from Heaven, and is still the great block and hinderance in the way to Heaven. How many have the curſed courſes and examples of the world, undone and damned? And how often doth the Scripture cautionate all to take heed of the world as a dangerous Rock, againſt which a thouſand *Demas's* have daſhed themſelves, and made ſhipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience.

Secondly, Conſider ſome particular grounds, Why Chriſtians are to be *Nonconformiſts* to the world.

1. Conformity to God and the World, cannot ſtand together, no more than the love of God and the love of the World can, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* There is an antipathy and contrariety berween God and the World. A man is never more like God, than when he is moſt unlike the World. Now a Chriſtian is to conform to God and Chriſt. The *firſt* and *beſt*, is ſaid to be the Rule of the reſt. Chriſt is our higheſt and beſt Pattern. Here is no ſerving of two Maſters; no conforming to two contrary Patterns. He that will be

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a *Conformist* to the World, must be a *Non-conformist* to God and Christ.

2. The world is one of the declared Enemies that a Christian is to fight against: worldly lusts, as well as fleshly lusts, fight against the soul; so that conforming to the world is taking part and siding with our Enemy. The Apostle saith (*Gal. 6. 14.*), *The world is crucified to me, and I to the world*; (*q.d.*) The world and I are upon equal terms of defiance; I neither care for the world, nor the world for me.

3. Christians are predestinated to another Conformity than that to the world: Rom. 8. 29. *For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Not to the Image of the world. Conformity to the world consists not with that Predestination.

4. What was a Christian's Rule and Pattern before conversion, cannot be his Rule after. Before conversion the world was so: *Eph.* 2. 3. The Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, that before conversion they walked according to the course of the world.

5. It was one end of Christ's living so long on earth, to give us a better and a more noble Pattern and Example, than

what the world gave, 1 Pet. 2. 21. *Leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*

6. It is a debasement to a Christian to be a *Conformist* to the world. The ground of Conformity and Imitation should be to advance and better; but in conforming to the world, a Christian doth but degrade himself; he writes after a Copy, by which he cannot mend his hand. It is observable in Scripture, what the wicked of the world are compared to; among Beasts, to Lyons, Bears, Wolves; among Plants, to Briers, Thorns, *&c.* Among other living Creatures, to Vipers, Dogs, Swine. What a debasement is it for Christians to be like such, to wallow as a Sow in the mire, *&c.*

Thus much for *Confirmation.*

III. The *Vindication* of the truth. So the question is this, *Whether all conformity to this world be unlawful?* And the reason of the question is this, Because the Apostle speaking of the fashion of the world (1 *Cor.* 7. 29.) he makes Marrying, and Weeping, and Rejoicing, and Possessing to be some of the fashions of the world

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So the question is, *Whether all conformity to the world in these its fashions, be unlawful?*

Ans. We must here distinguish of the Manners, Customs, and Fashions of the World; so they are of three sorts:

1. Some are Civil.
2. Some are Sinful.
3. Some are Doubtful.

1. There are the Civil Customs, Manners, and Fashions of the world; and concerning them, I answer, That all conformity to the world in those, is not unlawful; as to marry, to weep, to rejoyce, to buy, and possess, is not unlawful; yet I must tell you, that all conformity to the world, even in these things, is not lawful: For consider, Even in things that are lawful, it is not lawful for a Christian to be such in the practice, use, and enjoyment of those things, as the most of the world are; and therefore the Scripture, when it treats of those things which are in themselves lawful, yet it sets those bounds and limits to Christians which the World observes not. It calls upon Christians to have their affections set

on things above the world; to be sober in using the things of this world; to remember, while they are in this world, they are almost come to the end of the world; and so to use the world, as those that look for another world: to look upon this present world, as that that will shortly be the world past; and to look upon the world to come, as that that will shortly be the world present, all the days of Eternity. I shall give you two places of Scripture, wherein Christians are forbid to be Conformists to the world even in these things; One is 1 Pet. 4. 7. *The end of all things is at hand, be ye sober.* The word is σωφρονήσατε: it's diversly rendred; but here its taken for *sober-mindedness*: Sobriety, properly taken, is a moderation of the Appetite about eating and drinking: but here it is put for the moderation of the Affection about the world, and the things of the world. The sobriety there enjoined, implies,

1 *Modesty* } of *Mind.*
2 *Moderation* }

1. *Modesty of Mind:* So Rom. 12 13 *Let no man think more highly of himself than*

than he ought to think, but think soberly *of himself*, &c. Where Sobriety is opposed to pride of heart. And in this a Christian must be a *Nonconformist* to the world. He may marry a Wife, but must not be proud of a Wife; he may purchase, but not be proud of his Purchase; he may possess, but not be proud of his Possession. Now this is the way of the world, to be proud of all their enjoyments; and in this Christians are not to conform to it.

2. *Moderation of Mind:* And so Sobriety is opposed to letting out the heart and affections too much upon the world: and this is the sobriety that is called for, and wherein Christians must be unlike the world. It is not this that Christians are exhorted to, To give over marrying, and possessing, and using the things of this world; but to be moderate in the use of them, and therein to be unlike the world. And it is observable what reason the Apostle gives for this Sobriety in the place fore-mentioned, *viz. The end of all things is at hand:* An end of all the Civil Customs, Fashions, and Manners of the world; an end of Marrying, Buying, Possessing; an end of Building, Planting, Eating, and

Drinking; an end of all Worldly Businesses, Employments, and Enjoyments. And this he makes the reason why Christians should be sober and moderate in these things, and herein to be unlike the world.

The other Scripture is 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30. *This I say, Brethren, the time is short*, &c. Consider, the *Corinthians* had written to the Apostle to be resolved in divers cases; and among others, some concerning Marriage: To which the Apostle gives an answer in that Chapter, telling them, he could not give an absolute determination what was to be done; but he did suppose that this and that was best; and then addeth, *But this I say, brethren*, &c. as if he should say, The questions are difficult, and the answers (it may be) you will find doubtful; but this I can tell you of certainty, without *if's* and *and's*, positively and resolvedly, and of which you need not doubt; *Brethren, the time is short*; *Let those that have Wives, be as though they had none*, &c. The meaning is, that a Christian is to have his heart above all Creature-comforts, and all Creature-crosses; and in this, Christians are to be unlike the world.

1. Saith

Saith the Apostle, *Let them that have Wives, be as though they had none.* Now he that hath a Wife, hath two things:

1. A great deal of *comfort.* A Wife is a second-self, one that a man can make a partaker of all his contentments, and who will be a sharer with him in all his crosses (supposing her to be a good Wife).

2. A great many *cares.* *Such* (saith the Apostle) *as are married, shall have trouble in the flesh,* 1 Cor. 7. 28. Now when the Apostle saith, That such as have Wives, must be as though they had none; the meaning is, they must moderate their affections in that enjoyment, that they be neither taken too much with the comforts, nor vext too much with the crosses in a Wife. And so for the rest, when the Apostle speaks of weeping, and rejoycing, and possessing, that we should be as though we wept not, and rejoyced not, and possessed not; the meaning is, that we should still remember, that there are greater things to be wept for, and to be rejoyced in, than the things of this World; and greater Possessions to be sought after, than the Possessions of this life: and then observe the Apostle's Motives to enforce this Exhortation.

1. *The time is short: Tempus est contractum*, so *Beza*; The time is contracted, it is drawn into a narrow compass. The *Greek* word is συνεσταλμένος, which signifies such a contraction and drawing in, as of Sailors, as is used by Sea-men and Boat-men when they draw near to shore. Some refer it to the time of life; so that the Apostle's meaning is, That *the time of life is short.* Those that lived in the first Ages of the world, had their lives drawn out, the thread of their lives was spun out longer; they by the course of Nature lived Six hundred, Seven hundred, Eight hundred years; so they might have their thoughts more busied about the world, in peopling Countreys, in marrying Wives, in building Cities, *&c.* the time of their life was long: but now *the time is short*; and therefore Christians are so to use the world, as those that must shortly leave it.

Others think the Apostle (when he saith *the time is short*) means the time of the World's being and continuance, is short: that God is gathering in the Sails of Time, and that the end of the World is at hand; it is not long that there will be no more marrying, no more weeping, no more rejoycing,

joycing, no more poſſeſſing in this world, becauſe the time of the world's being is ſhort. This is the Apoſtle's firſt Reaſon, why we ſhould be moderate in theſe things.

2. The ſecond Motive is, *The faſhion of the world goeth away:* And as the other led the Van, ſo this brings up the Reer of the Exhortation; the *Greek* word is σχῆμα, the *Scheam*, which ſignifies a *Mathematical* Figure, only external and accidental, without ſubſtance: The Vulgar renders it *Figura*, the Figure of the World: *Beza* renders it *Species*, the Show of the World: Some think the Apoſtle therein alludes to a Comedy, or a Shew upon a Stage, which is but a ſhew or appearance; ſo all the things of the world are but a ſhew and appearance; there is no true ſolidity or reality in them: and then obſerve he ſaith, *It paſſeth away*, to ſhew that the World is upon Gate and Motion; it hath been ſome thouſands of years paſſing by us, and the Reer of it is coming up, and it will not be long ere the World and all the faſhions of it (as Marrying, Weeping, Rejoycing, Poſſeſſing, &c.) will be paſt and gone. Though its now the faſhion of the world, yet

yet ere long these things will be no more.

The sum of all that I have been speaking to, is this, That though Christians may be *Conformists* to the world in these Civil things, yet not in all respects; and that in their conforming to things lawful and civil, yet there must even in that conformity be something wherein they must be unlike the world. We may do some things that the world doth, but we may not do them in all respects as the world doth them. Our Saviour telleth us, (*Luke* 20. 34.) *The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage*; i.e. Those that live in the world, while they are in the world, have this way, and manner, and fashion, and custom; *they marry, and are given in marriage:* where the things themselves of *marrying, and giving in marriage*, are not condemned; but this is condemned, Our being like the world even in those things that are in themselves lawful. And this appears by another expression of our Saviour, (*Luke* 17. 26, 28.) *As it was in the days of Noah, they eat, they drank, they married, and gave in marriage*, &c. *And as it was in the days of Lot, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded*, &c. Now these were things

that

that were never unlawful in themselves. It was never unlawful in any age, for a man to eat, and drink, and marry, and give in marriage. It was never unlawful for a man to buy and sell, to plant and build; and yet this seems to have been the way of the world then, which is by our Saviour condemned. But the meaning of our Saviour is this, That though they were lawful things, yet by the men of that Generation they were used unlawfully. They made it the main and whole business of their lives, to eat and drink, to marry and give in marriage, to buy and sell, to plant and build; they minded nothing else, as if they were only made for those ends, and no other, no higher. But in this, Christians must be unlike the World: they may eat and drink, marry, buy, sell, plant, build; but still remember, they were made for higher and nobler Ends than these, and not be in the use and practise of these things, as the World is. The World's excess in these things, is by Christians to be avoided. So then, to close all, There is a conformity to the Word in Civil things, that is lawful for Christians, but not a full conformity. Thus much for the Civi

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Manners and Customs of the World.

Secondly, There are the Sinful Manners, Customs, and Fashions of the World, which are in themselves purely sinful. Now to these it is unlawful for a Christian to be a *Conformist* in any respect. The Apostle (*Ephes.* 2. 2.) speaks of those that were then Christians, That *in time past they walked according to the course of this world*; where he means not the *civil* course, but the *sinful* course of this world, as it appears ver. 3. *Fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of the flesh, and of the mind.* Where the Apostle shews, that this was the course of the World then, and that they conformed to it in the time of their unregeneracy, which now they ought not to do, being called to be Christians; and convinceth them, that their conformity in times past, was their sin. So then, a Christian's conforming to the sinful courses of the world, is absolutely unlawful. It's the commendation given of the Saints of old, That they were utterly *Nonconformists* to the world in sinful things. Thus *Noah* is said to be a man *perfect in his generation*, Gen. 6. 9. He did some things that the men of his generation did; *Noah* did

did eat, and drink, and marry, all this the men of his generation did sinfully, and in this *Noah* did not conform to them. So we may see how *Lot* behaved himself in his generation; he was so far from conforming to their sinful manners, that the Apostle tells us (2 *Pet.* 2. 7.), *That his righteous soul was vexed with their wicked conversation.* And the same Apostle tells the Christians in his time, of their *Nonconformity* to the sinful manners of those times, 1 Pet. 4. 4. *Wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them into the same excess of Riot.* They thought it strange, they would not do as the wicked of those times did. What was the course of the Wicked of those times? The Apostle shews, *v.* 3. *For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*; and so mentions *lasciviousness, lusts, excess of Wine, revellings, banquetings*, &c. These manners of the world being sinful without dispute and controversie, they are not at all by Christians to be conformed to.

And thus much for the sinful Manners and Fashions of the World.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, There are the *doubtful* Manners, and Fashions, and Customs, of the World; such as about which there may be a question, Whether they are sinful or not? Concerning these, Christians ought to examine their conformity by Scripture-Rules. Under this doubtful conformity, comes conformity to Exotick Modes in Behaviour and Apparel; the saying indeed is, *That though fools bring up Fashions, yet wise men will be obliged to follow them:* I am not for an affected singularity, it being commendable prudence to conform our selves to what Custom (in an indifferent matter) hath made to be general in the practise of all. But Christians are to take heed of a conformity to those fashions that are either so immodest or extravagant, that they become not Christianity. It's very doubtful whether we are to be of the number of those who are first in the fashion, or to change from one extream to another; the Scripture (without doubt) condemns excess in these things. How many are there, which spend more time in trimming and decking themselves, than in serving God! Which gave occasion to Sir *Thomas Moor*, to say to a Lady (whom he

he beheld industriously curious in dressing and trimming her self) *O Madam, how unjustly will God deal with you, if he give you not Hell, since you take such extraordinary pains for it!* Christians must know, where there is in fashions an affected vanity in apparel & dressing, savouring of pride, a conformity therein remains no more doubtful, but is absolutely sinful. To these fashions may be referred, Painting, Frizling, Powdering, and Black-patching; of the last of which, a *Romanist* saith, *That if the Divine Work-man should so fix those their best contrived Patches, as to remain ever immovable, they would soon be ashamed to appear with such disguised deformities; and all would then esteem them (as indeed they are) but a meer disfiguring of what they so vainly intended to beautifie and amend.* In the matter of Fashions, Christians must know, that there are some things, which if they are not sin, are near a-kin to sin; and a conformity to these things is to be avoided, according to the precept of the Apostle, 1 Thes. 5.22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*; the saying is, *In dubiis minimum*, In doubtful things its good to do the least. I shall close up this of *doubtful Conformity*,

formity, with that passage in *Ezra* 2.61,62, 63. There were some that upon the return from the Captivity, pleaded that they were of the Priest's Line; but the Register being searched, and their Genealogy not found, they were put by the Priesthood till there should stand up a Priest with *Urim* and *Thummim*. So it were well in these doubtful cases, if Christians would avoid conformity to these things, till there be more Scripture-light to warrant it. What hath been attempted by some (as particularly, by the Author of that Book entituled, *Auxiliary Beauty*), it tends more to please Fancy, than to satisfie Conscience, and to warrant the practise.

Thus much for the Doubtful Manners and Fashions of this world.

APPLICATION.

1. *Information:* So you have the true Character of a true Christian: He is one that is a *Nonconformist* to the world. His motion is a Counter-motion to that of the world. Though he liveth in the world, yet he conforms not to the world. The Apostle (2 *Cor.* 10.3.) distinguisheth between living

living in the flesh, and after the flesh; so there is a walking in the world, and walking after the world. True Christians make the sinful courses and practises of the world, the object of their sorrow and lamentation, but not of their imitation. Thus did *Noah*, and *Lot*, and other holy ones in their generation; they are *Antipodes* to the world in judgment, affection, conversation. We read of Heathens, that in their generations would not conform to the men of their generation; but what they did, was out of singularity: but what Christians do, is to be out of sincerity. It should be with Christians as with the Planets, which have a motion of their own, contrary to the wrapt motion of the Heavens, whereby they are carried from East to West: they have a retrograde and secret motion of their own; whereby they are carried from West to East. So the children of God, though they live and converse in the World, yet have a motion of their own, contrary to the World: As some Creatures being hatched under a hen, presently flye or run away. Though a Christian in the Civil things of this life, seem to move as the World moves, yet hath

he a motion of his own Heaven-wards, which the World suspects (and blindly censures), but understands not.

2. *Inform.* What are we then to think of those that are *Conformists* to the world: Is it to be thought that those will ever be accounted Christians on Scripture-account, that conform to the world? It's sad to see how many call themselves Christians, who when the Image and Superscription that they bear, comes to be examined will be found to be only Worldlings: may be, Christians in their own account and esteem, but not in God's. You that call your selves Christians, consider whose Image and Superscription you bear. Such you are as the Image is that you bear, and the Pattern to which you conform. True Christians are such as bear the Image of Christ, and conform to the Pattern and Example of Jesus Christ; and those cannot be real Christians that conform to the World. It is not an outward Profession that makes a true Christian, *Rom.* 2. 28. *is not a Jew that is one outwardly.* They are not true Christians that are only so in bare profession. God looks what a Christian's conformity is, and what copy and patt

pattern he writes after. The Apostle speaks of some (2 *Tim.* 3. 5.), *that had a form of godliness, but denied the power of it.* It is the power of Godliness and Christianity, that speaks one to be godly, and a Christian indeed. And this power of godliness is a transforming power; it makes those that have it, God-like, and so godly; Christ-like, and so Christians indeed. So then, in Christianity there are two things to be considered, the *Profession*, and the *Power*. Now it is the power of Christianity, and not the profession only, that speaks us to be Christians. It's true power cannot be without profession, but profession may be without the power. A Tree that bears fruit, must of necessity have leaves; but a Tree may have leaves, and yet no fruit. And such a Tree, notwithstanding the fair purish it makes, is but barren, and like the Fig-tree in the Gospel which our Saviour cursed, coming to it, finding leaves only, and no fruit, *Matt.* 21. 19. So then, there is a power in godliness which speaks men to be truly godly; so there is a power in Christianity which must speak men to be truly Christians. Now, this power of Christianity doth conform and

transform us into the Image of Christ. As the power of godliness makes us (as I said before) God-like; so this power of Christianity, Christ-like. But where is a conformity to the world, there is a power, whereby men are made world-like; and how can those that are like the world, that bear a worldly and an earthly Image, and not the heavenly, and that of Christ, be Christians indeed? It is sad to see so many call themselves Christians, that are so much conformable to the world, to its sinful courses, fashions, rules, and examples; as if Christianity did not hold forth higher and more excellent examples and patterns for them to imitate, and higher and more heavenly rules for them to walk by. To such we may say as the Prophet said to the Messengers of *Ahaziah*, *Is it because there is no God in Israel, that thou sendest to Baal-zebub, the God of Ekron?* So you that call your selves Christians, let me ask you, Why do you conform to the World and its sinful courses? Is it because you are so commanded to do? You see the Scripture commands the contrary. Is it because you have nothing higher and better than the World to conform to? Sure you have. The sa-

in

ing is, *The first and best in every thing, is the Rule of the rest.* Are you not called to a conformity to the best? That God that is *Optimus Maximus*, the Best and Greatest, calls you to be like him, calls you to be like his Son, who is the most perfect pattern for our imitation; calls you to be like his Saints, who in their several generations pleased God, served his Will, and are fallen asleep: he calls you to be like those Servants of his that are yet in the World, and to be followers of them as they are of Christ: He calls you out of the World, and to be unlike it, and to have nothing to do with it by way of conforming in the least to its sinful courses. He cautionates you against such a conformity, and tells you the dreadful danger of it; and he hath laid down Rules in his Word, by which Christians are to walk, that are made up altogether of that purity and holiness, of which the World is altogether void, it lying (as the Apostle saith) in wickedness. And now tell me, How can he be a Christian indeed, that is a *Conformist* to the World? and such as are *Conformists* to the World (you see) have nothing to plead in that particular, as if they had not better

Rules to walk by, and higher Patterns to imitate, than those of the World. He that is a Christian indeed, is one that hath given up his Name to Christ, and entred it into his List; and how can such a one serve and fight under the Colours and Banner of the World? Such forget their *Baptismal Covenant*, one clause of which is this, *Renouncing and forsaking of the world.* Christians, let me tell you, There is a day a coming, when the great enquiry will be, Whose Image and Superscription you bear. Your *Conformity* or *Nonconformity* to the world, will speak that, and accordingly will be your doom.

3. *Inform.* Here we may see what is the cause, why *Christians* (that will be *Christians* indeed) meet with so much trouble and opposition in and from the World; the cause is, *Nonconformity* to the World; the ground of the quarrel between the World and them is, That they are unlike the World; that they will not do as the most do; that they will not do as their Neighbours do; that they are unlike every body; that they are a company of foolish precise persons, that delight to be singular. This is the reason why the World, and the

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men of it, hate those that are truly godly: Every thing loves its like; and the unlikeness of the Saints to the World, is the cause both of the World's hatred, and the World's wonder at them, 1 Pet. 4. 4. *Wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot.* The Saint's strictness is the VVorld's wonder. As I said before, it is in this case as with the Eggs of Patridges hatched under a Hen; when they are hatched, they run, and (as soon as they can) make away. The VVorld is (as it were) the Hen, under whose wings *Christians* are for a while hatched; but when they begin to take their flight upwards, then the world wonders at them. And as this is the cause of the VVorld's wonder, so it is the cause of the VVorld's hatred of them, and of all the afflictions and persecutions they meet with in and from the world. Our Saviour told his Disciples, *In the world you shall have affliction*; and gives this as the reason of it, *I have chosen you out of the world. The world* (as our Saviour saith) *will love its own*, those in whom it can see its own conditions, dispositions; its own Image and Superscription. Likeness causeth love;

and upon this account it is that the world cannot but love those in whom she espies her own likeness, and cannot but hate those that are unlike, and in whom she cannot see a conformity to her. Hence it is that the World hath always been a Stepmother to the Saints of God, using them rigidly and coarsely, as those whom she did not own as hers, because they owned not her by a conformity to her. *Christians*, if you be not like the World, you must not think it strange if you be hated in and by the World. If you have not the world's *likeness*, you are not to expect the world's *love*. If you walk contrary to the world, you must expect that the world will walk contrary to you. Your *non-conforming* to it, is a secret condemning of the world's ways and courses; and then it is not to be wondred at, if the world condemn you.

Thus much for the Use of *Information*.

2. *Exhortation*. So I am now to exhort you to the duty of *Non-conformity* to the World; and in doing this, I shall acquaint you with three things:

First, With what are some of the causes of a *Conformity* to this World.

Second-

Secondly, With some discoveries, whereby we may know whether we are not conformed to this World.

Thirdly, With some directions to prevent your being *Conformists* to this World.

First, We shall shew you some of the causes why so many are *Conformists* to the World; and they are chiefly two:

1. A base and slavish fear of the World's Frowns.

2. A base and sinful love of the World's Favours.

And from both these proceeds that base and sinful compliance with the World, and conformity to it.

1. A base and slavish fear of the World's Frowns. They fear the trouble they may meet with in the World, if they should swim against the stream of being unlike the World. Most love a Religion without trouble: and although opposition be made the Attendant of true Religion, following it as the shadow doth the body; yet most love (as a cheap Religion which may cost them nothing, so) such a peaceable Religion as may not disturb their

their worldly rest, but that will suffer them to sleep in a whole skin. Indeed, for a man to be no more religious than the World would have him be, may seem to make for his outward peace. As a wise man said, *For that man that would deny his body no sensual pleasure, and yet save his soul at last, there was no place like that of* Italy, *and no Religion like that of* Rome: So I say, For that man that only studies his outward peace, (*viz.* a freedom from the World's malice, hatred, and opposition) there is no Religion like the World's. And hence it is that so many comply with it, and conform to it. Consider, there is in every one naturally a strong propensity and inclination to these four things.

1. To be thought some-body in the World, and not to be looked upon as Cyphers, as No-bodies; to be well accounted of, well spoken of by the most of their generation. Some extreamly affect the good-will and the good-word of every one, and hereby are betrayed to a sinful compliance. Although such should remember the saying of our Savior, *Wo unto you when all men speak well of you.* Mat. 5.

2. There is a desire in most to be as free from

from trouble and oppoſition in the World, as they can. Moſt ſay with *Iſſachar*, *Reſt is good.* Why ſhould I (ſay ſome) create trouble to my ſelf, and may chuſe? Why ſhould I croſs with the World, and cauſe the World to croſs with me? If I do as the World doth, and conform to it, I need not fear its frowns. And this is one cauſe why ſo many ſinfully comply with, and conform to the World; not remembring the ſaying of our Saviour, Matt. 5. 10. *Bleſſed are thoſe that are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake*, &c.

3. There is in men naturally a deſire to have company in their way. Man is a ſociable Creature, and loves company. Now the way of the World is the way moſt beaten, and trodden, and frequented, being the way that moſt walk in. Men naturally love not ſolitary paths, but thoſe in which they can ſee moſt foot-ſteps. And upon this account it is that ſo many comply ſinfully with the World, for the ſake of company; not at all conſidering whither the broad way leads; nor that prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil.*

4. Men

4. Men naturally desire Elbow-room in their way. They love ways wherein they may enjoy the most of sinful liberty; and this they fancy to be only found in the way of the World; they would have room for them and their lusts to march together: and such a way the way of the World is; the wide way (as our Saviour saith) that leads to destruction. And hence it is that so many comply with the World; not considering, That it's easier for a man to have so much Religion and Christianity as will please the World, and go to Hell at last, than to have so much as will please God, and bring him to Heaven.

2. The second cause is, A strong love to, and desire after the World's Favours. There is an innate dispostion in persons to enjoy the World's Sun-shine, thinking there is a refreshment in those beams. They think it sweet to sit in the World's lap, to be hugg'd in the World's bosome, to be embrac'd in the World's arms. Many love not to see others embraced, and themselves cast out; to see others favoured, and themselves frowned on; to see others the world's Darlings, and they to be the world's Out-casts. The world hath its temptati-

temptations on both hands. On the one hand there are its perſecutions, and threats, and frowns; on the other hand, its preferments, allurements, and favours; and the laſt of theſe have often proved the moſt powerful temptations to draw men to a compliance with the world. Thus it's obſerved of *Julian*, That he drew more away, and made more Apoſtates by his Preferments, than he did by his Perſecutions. We read (*Rev.* 12.4.), that the Dragon with his tail drew the third part of the Starrs from Heaven: the meaning is, that many that were eminent in the Church, and did ſhine as Starrs, were drawn away, and became Apoſtates, by the tail of the Dragon, *i.e.* by its embraces. And this is one great reaſon why men have been brought to comply with, and conform to the world. And this hath ever been the world's way of tempting; it firſt frowns, and then flatters; and the latter hath been found to be the moſt dangerous: Thus was that famous *Galeacius* aſſaulred; and when they ſaw threatnings would do nothing, he was offered a great ſum of Gold to return again to his former Religion and Countrey: but his anſwer was,

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That he preferr'd one day's communion with Christ in the Gospel, before all the Gold in the world. And thus it was with *Luther*; when they saw Bulls and nothing else by way of Menace, would do, then they offered him a Cardinals Hat; but his answer was, *Contemptus est à me Romanus & favor, & furor*; I despise both *Rome*'s Favours and Fury. Though these stood as unshaken Mountains; yet, how many, if not by the first, yet by the last have been overcome; like the Traveller, who by the wind kept his Cloak closer, was by the warm and alluring beams of the Sun invited to cast it off. The Sun-shine of the world hath had more influence upon men to conform them to the world, than all its cold and stormy blasts could have. It's Favours and Preferments hath drawn those whom its Persecutions could not drive. Hence it is that so many comply with, and conform to the world; not remembring, that there is more comfort and happiness attends those that are the world's Cast-aways, than those that are the world's Darlings. Those Christ chuseth to be the objects of his love, whom the world casts out as objects of her hatred.

Second-

Secondly, Consider the trials and discoveries; VVhether we are *Conformists* or *Non-conformists* to this world.

1. He that is a *Non-conformist* to the world, is one unlike the world; he is unlike the world in his judgment, affection, conversation; he doth not judg as the world judgeth, of Christ, of Holiness, of Heaven, of Saints, of Sin. Here is the question, VVhether we differ from the world in these? One said of *Nero*, *That must needs be good that* Nero *persecutes*. And so I say, That must needs be evil that the world commends, and good that the world condemns. Try your selves by this, Do you judg as the world judgeth? Do you love and hate, as the world loves and hates? Is your conversation according to the course and conversation of the world? Then you may conclude, you are *Conformists* to the world. Oh that Christians would but examine themselves seriously, wherein they are unlike the world; and by that they may find whether they are *Non-conformists* to the world. I am brief in this, because I have spoken more largely to it before:

2. He that is a *Non-conformist* to this world,

world, is a *Conformist* to another world. When the Apostle saith, *Be not conformed to this world*; it implies, there is another world to which we ought to conform. Scripture mentions a world that now is, and a world that is to come. There is another world besides this present world; a world that will be, when this world shall be no more. As I said before, so I say again, It is but a little while, and the world present will be the world past; and the world to come, will be the world present all the days of Eternity. Now Christians, you are to be *Conformists* to the world that is to come; there is an Earthly and a Heavenly world; and the great thing you have to do, is to examine what Conformity there is in you to the latter (to the Heavenly world) that is to come. And what of Heaven is to be seen in you? What of Heaven in your judgments? Do you conform to the world to come in that? Christians, you see here how the world judgeth of things and persons: but, Do you think we shall have in Heaven that judgment of things that the men of the world have now? If you ask, How we shall judg of things here, who are yet

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on Earth, and not in Heaven? Why the *Word*, and not the *World*, is your Rule; you need not say, Who shall go up into Heaven to bring us tidings what is the judgment of things there; we have it near, in the written Word. Next, What conformity is there to Heaven in your Affections? Are they heavenly? Remember, the Command is (*Col.*3. 2.), *Set your affections on things above.* And, What conformity is there in your conversation? Is your conversation in Heaven? The Apostle saith, the conversation of a Christian should be so, *Phil.*3 27. What engravings of Heaven are there on your conversations? What beginnings of Heaven have you in you? How many are there that begin Hell on Earth, and have the engravings of Hell written upon their conversations? These indeed are *Conformists* to another World, but it is that World of Darkness, and not of Light, that is to come.

But in prosecuting these Discoveries of *Nonconformity* to this World, for every one's better and fuller satisfaction, I shall proceed by way of Enquirie; those shall be of two sorts:

1. Some more general.
2. More particular.

1. More general: And so the Enquiry is this, What conformity is there in you to those that are in Heaven, and that inhabit Heaven? If you ask, Who are in Heaven? The Scripture tells you, That there is

- A God.
- A Christ.
- Angels.
- Spirits of just men.

1. God is in Heaven, his Throne there. He dwells there in respect of the manifestation of his glorie. He is said to *inhabit Eternity, and to dwell in that high and holy place*, Isa. 57. 15. The enquirie is this, God is in Heaven; and, What conformitie is there in you on Earth, to the God who is in Heaven? You are called to be like him, to be holy as he is, to be merciful as he is (not in respect of equalitie, but similitude and likeness). You are called to be partakers of the Divine Nature; and, What is that but to be part-

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kers of Divine Graces, by which we bear his Image, and so become like him? You are called Children of God, and Children are to resemble the Father: Now try, how you resemble him, and by that, your conformitie to him.

1. Consider how God judgeth of things. Here the Scripture gives us light; and by it you are to see whether you judg of things as God doth. He judgeth of Sin as the greatest Evil, of Sinners as the greatest Enemies; of Grace, as most excellent; of gracious ones, as most precious; of Heaven, as most desirable; of the World, as most vain and contemptible. Thus God in his Word declares his judgment of these things. Now the Query is, What conformitie there is in our judgments to His? Whether we judg of things as God judgeth of them? And so for the estimative facultie, Whether you esteem things as God esteemeth them? The godly man is described (*Psal.* 15.) to be one *in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.*

2. How God-like are you in your affections? and, What conformitie is there in ours to his? The Scripture acquaints us

with what God loves, and with what he hates, and with what he delights in. The Scripture tells us what he loves; That he loves righteousness, loves holiness; he loves uprightness, he loves truth and sincerity in the inward parts. Now put the question to your selves, Whether you love the things which God loves? The Scripture tells us what God hateth, He hateth iniquitie, and all the workers of iniquitie; he hateth sin, and all sinful ways; he hateth all sin. And now see what conformitie there is in your affections, of hatred to this? The Scripture acquaints us, what it is that God delights in. It tells us, that he delighteth in those that fear him; He delighteth in uprightness. He is a God that hath pleasure in uprightness. He delighteth in mercy. Now Christians, try what conformitie there is in you to your Heavenly Father in these things.

2. Christ is in Heaven, *Phil.* 3. 20. *from whence we look for a Saviour*, &c. We look for him from Heaven: And it is an Article of our Faith, *That he is ascended into Heaven:* Though Christ be in Heaven and you on Earth, yet there is to be in Christians a conformitie to Jesus Christ

Christ

Christ is the Head; now he is in Heaven, and the members must be conformed to the Head. Though he be in Heaven, yet he hath left us such foot-steps on Earth, in which we are to tread. Those that will come to Christ in Heaven, must tread in his steps on Earth, and so ascend up to him. Christians are still to be followers of Jesus Christ. Christ is the great Master they are to follow, and the grand Pattern they are to imitate. The great Apostle said, *Be followers of me, as I am of Christ.* Now, Christians, trie what conformitie there is in you to Jesus Christ; and you have reason to put your selves upon the trial, because the Apostle telleth us (*Rom.* 8. 28.) *We are predestinated to be conformed to his Image.* Let me tell you, there are three things wherein Christians are called to be conformable to Jesus Christ, viz. *Sufferings*, *Sanctity*, *Glory*. In this world we are called to be conformed to Jesus Christ in the two first: when we come to Heaven, we shall be made conformable to him in the latter. Now the Querie lieth about the two first.

1. Christians, What conformitie is there in you to Jesus Christ in your *Suffer-*

ings? It cannot be that a Christian can be a Christian indeed, but he must be a suffering Christian: if it come not so high as to resisting unto blood, yet it may come to bonds and imprisonments; if not so high, yet to scoffs, nick-names, reproaches, for the sake of Christ. Now, Christians, In your *sufferings* are you conformed to Jesus Christ? Do you suffer meekly, patiently, rejoicingly? Christ was patient in his sufferings: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth.* He prayed for his persecutors: *When he was reviled, he reviled not again*; and in that, the Apostle *Peter* telleth us, *He left us an example, that we should tread in his steps*, 1 Pet. 2. 23. Now trie your selves whether you are like Christ, or the world, under *sufferings*: It is the way of the world, to return like for like, railing for railing, reviling for reviling; to fret, and murmure, and be impatient under their *sufferings*. Christians, Jesus Christ when he was on earth, and in the days of his *suffering*, was otherwise. Now see to whom you conform in your *sufferings*, whether to Christ or the World.

2. What

2. VVhat conformitie is there in you to Jesus Christ, in respect of *Sanctity* and *Holiness?* Though Jesus Christ be now in Heaven, yet he hath left us his foot-steps of that wherein we are to tread He was one that went about, doing good. He was abundant in dutie, and much in prayer. He was so holy in the whole course of his life, that he challenged any to convince him of sin. He suffered wrong, but did no wrong, *neither was guile found in his mouth.* He was conformable to his Father's will, and it was his meat and drink to do it. He was much in self-denial; he denied himself in his dearest things; he laid aside his own glory: he laid down his own life for the salvation of poor sinners. He was much in holy and heavenly discourse, ever speaking of the Kingdom of heaven; and taking occasion from earthly things, to reflect on and discourse of heavenly things. He was much in instructing, counselling, comforting his Disciples. He stood up for the honour of his Father, and defended the truth against all opposition. All this, and much more, did he in the days of his flesh, when he was on earth, and therein left us an example. He

made a holy close of his life; As he lived, so he died. When the time of his suffering death drew near, he betook himself to prayer. Under his last sufferings he behaved himself meekly and patiently. When nailed to the Cross, he prayed for his persecutors, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* When he was giving up the Ghost, he commended his Soul to God, saying, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.* Thus, Christians, you see a short *specimen* of Christ's *Sanctity* when he was on Earth. Now trie your conformitie to Jesus Christ, who is now in Heaven? Can you say, *My Pattern is in Heaven*, as *Job* said of his *Witness*, Job 16. 19 *My Witness is in Heaven?* Do you tread in those steps of holiness that Jesus Christ hath left? which though we cannot exactly walk in; yet, Do you strive to come as near in imitating his Example, as you can? Remember, Christians, The world hath found out other ways than the way of Jesus Christ: There is the way of *Cain*, and *Corah*, and *Balaam*, and *Esau*, and *Ishmael*, in which the most of the world walk. But the way wherein you are to walk, is that way wherein Jesus Christ walked when

when he was on earth. Christians are called to be in this World, as Jesus Christ was in this World.

3. In Heaven are *Angels*. Angels of Light; who are called *holy Angels*, and are the Heavenly Courtiers. These are some of the Inhabitants of the World that is to come. Christians, You are to try what conformitie there is in you to these heavenlie Spirits, and whether you are conformable to Angels of Light, or Angels of Darkness. Those who are *Nonconformists* to this world, hold some conformitie to those glorious Angels that inhabit the other world; and the great and main conformitie to them, stands in our doing the will of God on Earth, as the Angels do it in Heaven; it is one Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven*. Now try your selves by this.

1. They do the will of God Zealously, with a great deal of heat, fervency, and intention of spirit, and are therefore called *Seraphims*. They are zealous for his work, and zealous in his work. Are you conformable to them in that?

2. Angels do the will of God Chearfully, with abundance of delight and joy; and

and therefore they are said to have Harps, to shew it is their Musick and Delight. All the Services God puts them upon, they go about with abundance of alacritie. Now what conformitie is there in you to Angels in this? When you go to dutie, Do you go about it as Angels do about their work? Remember, the most of the world are never more sad and dull, than when they are set about Heavenlie work; and never so chearful, as when they are out of God's work, and freed from Heavenlie employments.

3. Angels in Heaven do the will of God speedilie, and are therefore said to have wings. They never dispute the commands of God; no sooner are they bid go, but they go. What Messages they are sent about, what Work they are put upon, they do and execute readily and speedily. Now Christians, How like Angels are you in doing the Lord's work on earth? The way of the world is to move slowly, as *Pharoah's* Chariots when the Wheels were pulled off. But Christians, if you are conformable to the Angels, there is a readiness of mind in you to do the will of God; You stand ready prest for his Service, and

and have your Loins girded up.

4. Angels do the will and work of God with much self-denial: They ascribe all to God, and give him all the glorie; and therefore are said to *cast down their Crowns before the Throne:* and in *Ezech.* 1.8. they are said to have hands under their wings, as concealing their own abilities. Now, Christians, see what conformitie there is in you to the Angels, in this particular of *Self-denial.* It's the way of most of the world, when they do any thing that is good, to boast and be proud of it; as the *Pharisee*, of his fasting and duties. But those that are conformable (in this particular) to the Angels in Heaven, do nothing as of themselves, and give all the glory to God; as St. *Paul* did, who said, *By the grace of God I am what I am; and not I, but the grace of God which is in me.*

5 Angels do the will and the work of God with abundance of love. There is a sweet harmony and agreement among them in their Employments; they do not cross or thwart one another, they are obedient Servants to their Lord, and are in love and unitie among themselves. *Ezek.* 1.9. we read of the *Cherubims*, and the living

living Creatures, that their wings joined one to another, and they turned not when they went, and they went every one ſtraight forward; they did not go one this way, and another that way, but do ſweetly and mutually correſpond in doing the will of God. Now, Chriſtians, What conformitie is there in you to Angels in this? Do you ſweetly conſpire and agree together in ſerving God on Earth? Oh that Chriſtians were more Angel-like in this! Remember, Contention and Diviſion is the way of the world, and the way of carnal men; the Apoſtle tells us ſo, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *While there are ſtrifes and diviſions among you, are you not carnal, and walk as men.* Now, Chriſtians, I have ſhew'd you how the Angels in another world do the will of God; and try your ſelves what conformitie there is in you on earth, to them.

4. In Heaven are the Spirits and Souls of juſt men made perfect. Theſe are in another world, they are in Heaven; they inherit the Promiſes: and ſuch the Apoſtle commands us to be followers of. *Heb.* 6. 12. Now what conformitie is there in you to them?

1. We

1. We have reason to believe there is in them a longing for a full accomplishment of the number of the Elect, and for a full revelation of glory. They long for their own perfection, and that of all the Saints. This the world longs not for, the coming of the Kingdom of Glory. Our Saviour tells us how it was in the days of *Noah, they eat, they drank*, &c. and saith, it would be so in the days of his Coming. Now see what your conformitie is in this particular: Do you mind the Glory to come? Is there in you a looking for the coming of Jesus Christ?

2. The Spirits in Heaven are in perfect union. What ever disagreements were among the Saints on Earth, yet in Heaven they all agree: There *Calvin* and *Luther*, *Ridley* and *Hooper*, are agreed. Now see what conformitie there is in you to them? Is it your endeavour to preserve on Earth *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?*

3. The Spirits of just men departed, are with Christ, enjoying his presence, and rejoicing in it. Tell me, Do you rejoice in the thoughts of it? and do you long for it, and to be with Jesus Christ?

Thus for the general Queries.

2. Con-

2. Consider some particular Queries; and they are to enquire further what *Conformists* you are to another world?

1. Do you speak the language of another world? We read of speaking the *language of Canaan:* We know of what Countrey a man is, by the language that he speaks. Is your language heavenly? The Primitive Christians were charged with being affecters of Kingdoms, because they spake so often of the Kingdom of God. What shall we think of those whose words are either worldly or wicked? To what world are they conformed?

2. What life do you live? Is it the life of another world? Is your Conversation in Heaven? And have you the engravings of Heaven on them? It is sad to see that most of the world have the engravings of Hell upon their's.

3. What works do you? Do they relate to another world, or only to this? Praying, hearing, holy meditation, praising God, and religious duties, they relate to another world, to an heavenly world that is to come. How sad is it to see how many

many thereare whoſe works only relate to this world, or to the infernal vvorld of Darkneſs.

4. VVhat things do you moſt eye and look at? Are they the things of another world, or of this vvorld? The Apoſtle ſaith (2 *Cor.* 4. the laſt), *We look not upon the things that are ſeen*, &c. Do you moſt eye and long after heavenly Glory, Treaſures, and Poſſeſſions, or Earthly?

5. VVhat vvorld is it you make the greateſt preparation and proviſion for? Do you provide for that vvorld that novv is, or for that that is to come? VVe read of the fool in the Goſpel, that cheer'd himſelf vvith that, *That he had goods laid up for many years.* Hovv many are there, that have no thoughts of another vvorld? That provide for their peace, and ſafety, and contentment in this vvorld; that ſay, *What ſhall we do to be rich?* but never ask, *What they ſhall do to be ſaved?* that *lay up for themſelves treaſures on earth*, but *lay not up treaſures in heaven?*

6. VVhat place, and vvhat vvorld do you look upon as your home? Is it this vvorld, or that to come? If that to come, then you are in this, as ſtrangers and pilgrims;

grims; you lodg in it as in an Inn; and you walk through it as persons unconcerned in its sinful lusts and vanities.

7. What Right and Interest do you most rejoice in? Is it, that you have an Interest in this world? or, that you have an Interest in the world to come? Is it in that portion you enjoy here, or in that portion that God hath reserved for his in another world? Is it in your Mansions here, or in those that Christ hath provided in his Father's Kingdom for his?

8. VVhence do you fetch all your comfort in any sad and cloudy condition? Is it from this world, or from the thoughts of another world, where there shall be no more sorrow, nor weeping, nor death, *&c.*

9. VVhat promises do you most prise? VVhether those that are made concerning this world, or those that concern the world that is to come? The Apostle telleth us, *That godliness hath the promises of both.* But he that is a *Nonconformist* to this world, doth most highly prise the latter, and would not be without them for a world, to enjoy the former.

10. How do you do the Civil businesses of this world? Do you do them as relating

to

to another world? Do you so eat, and drink, and marry, and use the World, as those that think of Eternity, and as those that shortly look for Eternity? Do you so use this World, as those that must shortly leave it, and must go hence, to live in another World? It's sad to see how many there are, that live in this world as if there were no life to come, nor any other World to be looked for. Now, Christians, if you are *Nonconformists* to this World, you use it with weaned affections, as those whose time is short, and are passing out of this life into another.

Thus much for the Evidences, Whether we are *Nonconformists* to this World.

3. Directions what to do; with Considerations propounded, that we may not be *Conformists* to this World: With Means and Helps prescribed, How we may be delivered from such a *Conformity*.

1. Those that would be *Nonconformists* to this World, must be much in comparing both Worlds together, this World, with that which is to come. They must take a

view of both Worlds, and by that means they will come to discern which of the two is most worthy of their conformity, to which it's most rational to conform. When we have compared them together, as we shall find this World not worthy to be compared with the World to come; so neither worthy to be conformed to.

So, consider what a World that is, that is to come; and then see how worthy that World is of a Christian's conformity. The Scripture gives us some account of the World to come, what a World it is; and by that light we shall walk, in making a description of it.

1. The World to come, is an *Eternal World.* This World is but *temporary*; this is but *this present* world, this *now* world, which shortly will not be. As *David* saith of the wicked of the world (*Psal.* 37.), *Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; thou shalt seek his place:* So we may say of this World, *Yet a little while, and it will be no more, and its place will not be found.* The great Creator set up this Earthly World to be as a Stage, wherein men (in their successive generations) are to act their parts for some thousands of years,

years, and then God will take it down. It is reserved for fire; it is drawing to its end, as the Apostle *Peter* saith, *The end of all things is at hand.* The World to come, is an enduring-world, which will to all Eternity continue, when this World will be no more. Christians, remember, you are made for Eternity; and if upon this account you compare both World's together, you cannot but conclude, its the Eternal world you are to be *Conformists* to.

2. The World to come is an *Unchangeable World*; its firm and fixed; a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, *Heb.* 12.28. But this World is a changeable World, and all the things of this World are changeable things. All the men in the World are changeable Creatures; they are all children of Change: Here one Generation goeth, and another cometh. There is no fixedness, setledness, stability here: Like the Moon, this World hath her changes. But the World to come, is the World that is unchangeable. As with the God of Heaven there is no variableness; so it is with Heaven it self. Now compare the two Worlds upon this account, and see which most worthy of your Conformity.

3. The World to come is a *Glorious World*. It is the place where Glory dwells. Heaven is the Houſe of Glory; its called *the Kingdom of Glory*; all that inhabit it, are glorious. There is the place where the glorious God (who inhabiteth Eternity) doth and will to all Eternity make the manifeſtations of his Glory. When we look upon the viſible Heavens (which are but the outſide of that Houſe), and ſee them ſo glorious, How glorious then are the Manſions within? As for this World, it is the place where Miſery and Baſeneſs dwells. Now if you compare the two worlds upon this account, then judg which world is moſt worthy of your conformity.

4. The Heavenly World is a *Holy World* where no ſin dwells. It's called *the Holy Heavens*, Pſal. 20. 5. There dwells righteouſneſs, 2 Pet. 3. 13. *We look for new Heavens, and new Earth, wherein dwells righteouſneſs*. No unclean thing ſhall or can enter there. The Apoſtate Angels, for their ſin and diſobedience, were caſt out thence and ſhall know their place there no more to all eternity. The *Heavenly Jeruſalem* deſcribed to be a City paved with Gold

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to shew, among other things, its purity. Now this world is an unholy world. *Gal.* 1.4. it's there called, *this present evil world.* It's an evil world, both in respect of Misery, and in respect of Sin. But in that world which is to come, as there will be no *suffering*, so no *sinning*. The Inhabitants of that world will to all Eternity be above both. Now if you compare the two worlds upon this account, then judg which world is to be conformed to.

5. The world to come is a *Quiet* and *Peaceable World.* It's the world of rest, where there are no stirrs, no troubles, no disturbances, no disquietments. It's the place where rest only is to be found. All Christians, while they are in this world, must say, *Here is not our rest. Rev.* 15.2. the world is resembled to a *Sea of Glass mingled with fire:* A *Sea of Glass*, to shew its brittleness and slipperiness; and *mingled with fire*, (i.e.) with the fire of afflictions, troubles, persecutions. This world indeed is a Christian's Hell. Now compare the two worlds together upon this account, and see which is worthy of your conformity.

6. The world to come, is the world for

which man was chiefly made. Christians, remember, you are made for another world. This world is to be but only as an Inn, in which you are to lodg as strangers and travellers, in your way and passage to another world. Christians must say of it, *That here they have no abiding City, but seek one that is to come*; and that is, the world to come. Man is a Creature made capable of Immortality; he hath an immortal Soul; and this shews he was made for another world. The Apostle tells us (1 *Cor.* 15. 19), *If in this life only we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable.* Christians, if you had been made only for this life, and had your hopes only in this world, and did not expect and hope for the great things of another life, and world that is to come; you were of all men most miserable. Remember, you were made for this End, *To glorifie God, and to enjoy him to all Eternity.* And this shews, that then you must be made for another world. Where can you serve him for ever, and enjoy him for ever, but in another world? To sing praises and Hallelujahs to God, will be the work of Saints in the Heavenly world. There they shall praise God to all Eternity, and shew

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what eternal debtors they are to Mercy and Free-grace. And then for the other chief End of man, which is, *The enjoyment of God for ever*; where can that be but in another world? The eternal fruition of God, and Christ, must be in a world that is Eternal, which is that world that is to come. Now, Christians, consider, what you do here in relation to serving of God, is but the beginning of that work we have to do in Heaven; and what you enjoy of God here, is but only a taste of that we shall enjoy of him in another world. Now upon this account consider, Christians, what world is worthy of your conformity.

7. The world to come, is *the world drawing near to us*; and the world present, is *the world going from us*. Christ, when he began to preach, said, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand:* where, by the Kingdom of Heaven, is meant the Heavenly Gospel, which open'd and made way to that world that is to come. So, let me tell you, The world to come, is at hand; the world to come, is the world to be; this present world, ere long, will not be. It is near parting with us, and we should be so with

it. Eternity is at hand, and vve live upon the borders of it. This vvorld hath not long to be, nor vve long to be in it: vvhen ye go out of it, ye enter upon Eternity; you go to an Eternal VVorld, vvhere you muſt have an Eternal Being. Now compare theſe tvvo vvorlds together upon all theſe accounts, and judg rationally which is moſt vvorthy of your conformity.

Thus for the firſt *Direction.*

2. *Direction.* That you may be *Nonconformiſts* to this vvorld, compare together the conſequences of a *Conformity* and a *Nonconformity* to the vvorld. Compare together the conveniences and inconveniences, the advantages and diſadvantages, the gain and the loſs, that you have by conforming and not conforming to this vvorld. So here are two things to be done;

1. To conſider, VVhat you vvill gain by being *Conformiſts* to the vvorld.
2. What you will loſe by *not conforming* to the vvorld.

1. Conſider, vvhat you vvilt gain by cou-

conforming to the world. All you gain, amounts but to this, *The World's good-will*, and *the World's good-word.* If you be a *Conformist* to the world, you shall have the love, and favour, and affection of the world; you shall be hugg'd in her bosome, you shall sit in her lap, you shall be accounted her Darlings, when others shall be but her Out-casts; you shall be high in the world's esteem; the men of the world will speak well of you living, and (perhaps) well of you when you are dead. They will speak what a loss they have, what an honest man is gone. This is the most (for ought I see) a man gains by a conformity to this world, To have the men of the world's good-will and good-word; whereby a man enjoys some outward peace, and quietness, and freedom from trouble; *that* (as the *Psalmist* speaks) *he comes not in trouble like other men.* And, besides all this, it may be he is made partaker of some of the world's Promotions and Preferments. This is the sum of what a man gains by being a *Conformist* to this world.

2. Consider, What a man loseth by a Conformity to this world. So consider what that loss amounts to.

1. A loss of inward peace. That man can have no true peace in his own spirit, that walks by a Rule that is destructive to his own soul, Isa. 57. 21. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* And if no peace to the wicked, then what peace can there be to those that conform to this world? Conformity to the world may give a man some outward peace; but it can never give a man that peace that is true peace, which is peace within, which is the peace of God and not of the world, *a peace passing understanding.*

2. Such as conform to the world, lose the favour of God. He that makes himself a Favourite of the world, makes himself one whom God looks upon as an Enemy: Jam. 4. 4. *The friendship of the world is enmity with God.* He that is a friend to the sinful courses, fashions, manners, and ways of the world, is a professed enemy to God, and God professeth himself an enemy to him. How shall God love and affect, favour and delight in that man, who forsakes those rules and ways that he hath prescribed him to walk in, and to conform to those patterns and examples which he hath proposed to him to

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imitate; to close with those ways, and to follow those examples which he hath flatly forbid us to walk in, and to conform to? So that every *Conformist* to the world is such a person as loseth the favour of God.

Now come and compare this gain and loss together.

1. The gaining of outward, and the loss of inward peace; and tell me, What shall it profit a man to gain worldly peace, and lose inward and spiritual peace? It's peace in the soul and spirit, that is the true peace. Christ told his, *That in him they should have peace*, when yet *in the world they should have affliction*. It is not peace *from* trouble, but peace *in* trouble; peace *within*, when there is trouble *without*, that is true peace. A man's greatest trouble, is trouble within, when it is in his own spirit: Prov. 18. 14. *The spirit will sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit, who can bear?* There are the lending-parts, and the borrowing-parts, in the body. If the lending-parts, as the heart, and brain, &c. be wounded; the borrowing-parts, *viz.* hand, or foot, cannot relieve them: but if the borrowing-parts be wounded, the lend-

lending-parts can relieve them. A quiet and a peaceable Spirit and Conſcience, relieves againſt all outward troubles, and helps a man to ſuſtain all his outward infirmities: But if there be trouble in the ſpirit, outward peace and proſperity cannot relieve that. Let the Winds be never ſo high and bluſtring, yet they cannot make an Earth-quake; but it's wind gotten into the inwards and bowels of the earth, that cauſeth that. It is not trouble *without*, that can trouble us, while there is peace *within*; no more than Hail-ſtones ratling on the Tiles of the Houſe, can hurt us, while we are at a Feaſt in a dry and warm Houſe. Alas! what is outward peace without inward! Peace *without*, when there is trouble *within*, can give no peace to the ſpirit; it reacheth not the leading-part. The Earth may as ſoon give light to the Sun, and a Tempeſt give reſt to the Sea, as outward and worldly peace can give reſt to a wounded ſpirit. What comfort is there in a man's being aſſured of freedom from the World's perſecutions, and to be under the apprehenſion of the purſuits of Eternal Wrath? Now compare theſe two together, the loſs of worldly and inward peace,

peace, and then consider what you gain by having peace *without*, and losing peace *within*.

2. Compare together the gaining of the world's favour, and the losing of the favour of God, and see what it will profit to be the world's Favourite, and God's Enemy. To have the world speak well of you, and to have the Lord speak against you. To have the world well pleased with us, and to lye under the displeasure of an Almighty God. To be the World's Darlings, and God's Out-casts. To be the World's chosen ones, and to be God's Reprobates. To have the world commend us, and God condemn us? Surely, those that have a kindness for the World's Favours, do little know or consider what the Favour of God is, which they lose by gaining that. They little think, that in his favour is life; and, that his favour is better than life. That it is his Favour that makes Heaven; and his Wrath and Displeasure that makes Hell. Now compare this gain of the World's Favour, with the loss of the Favour of God, and see what reason you have to conform to the World.

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2. Consider what you lose, and what you gain, by not conforming to this world; and compare those two together, and see which doth preponderate.

1. Consider what is the loss of not conforming to the world. I have spoken something to this before, and shall be brief in it here. All the loss amounts but to something that is only outward and temporal, *viz.* Credit, a good report from the world, a good repute with the world, worldly peace, freedom from the world's troubles and persecutions, the World's Favour, and its Preferments. The highest it can amount to, is but loss of Estate, loss of Liberty, loss of Life. This is the sum of what a man loseth by not complying with, and not conforming to the world.

2. Next, consider what a man shall gain by not conforming to the world. This is the great thing every one is apt to enquire after, *If I do so, what shall I get by it?* As *Peter* said, *Master, we have left all and followed thee; What shall we have?* So, if any shall say, We indeed hear that it is our duty to be *Nonconformists* to the World; and we know, such a *Nonconformity* is attended with many disadvantages; and

and we would gladly know what advantages do attend such a *Nonconformity*; and whether they over-weigh the disadvantages? To satisfie such, consider what such a one gains who is a *Nonconformist* to the World.

1. He gains the love, and esteem, and good report of those that are godly, and that are really so. Christ hath some chosen precious ones in the World, redeemed from the World, that are not of the world, whose Names are written in Heaven, who are Virgins, (*i.e.*) who are not defiled nor spotted with the World's corruptions and pollutions; you have a description of them, *Rev.* 14. 4, *&c.* such as vvalk in the steps of Christ here, and shall vvalk vvith Christ in vvhite hereafter. Novv consider, Your not conforming to the World, vvill gain the good report of these. What the Apostle saith, (Heb. 11. 2. *By faith the Elders obtained a good report*) may I say, By this *Nonconformity* you vvill obtain a good report from those that are truly and sincerely good. Novv compare this gain vvith the fore-mentioned loss: What is it to lose the good vvord of a Drunkard, a Swearer, a filthy wicked prophane person,

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and to be vvell reported of by thoſe that are holy and pious? Let me tell you, Next to God's Approbation, the Approbation of thoſe that are godly, is moſt deſirable. What comfort vvill this give a man upon his dying-bed, that all the Drunkards and Prophane perſons in the Countrey, commend him, and ſpeak vvell of him? Our Saviour ſaid, *Wo to you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you:* and ſurely then, Wo to that man of vvhom none can ſpeak vvell, but only ſuch as are vvicked.

2. By *not conforming* to the World, you vvill not only gain a *good report* from *godly men*, but alſo from *God* himſelf: let me tell you, They are ſuch as God makes high account of, whom Jeſus Chriſt highly priſeth, and vvhom the Angels in Heaven rejoice over. Look but into Scripture, and ſee hovv highly God commends thoſe vvho are *Nonconformiſts* to the men of their generation: The Apoſtle (in *Heb.* 11.) ſpeaks of the Faith of the holy men of old, as *Enoch*, of vvhom it's ſaid, *he walked with God*; and of *Noah*, who by building the Ark upon the vvarning he had from God, condemned the World. Let me tell you vvhat the Apoſtle ſpeaks of all them there

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in relation to their *Faith*, we may speak of them in relation to their *Nonconformity* to the world; that, as the Apostle saith, *v.* 2. *by Faith they obtained a good report*; so, by their *Nonconformity* to the world. What was *Enoch*, but a *Nonconformist*? What was *Noah*, but a *Nonconformist* to the men of his generation? What were *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but *Nonconformists* to the world, when it is expressly said of them, *v.* 13. that they confessed *that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*; that they *did look after a better Countrey*, (*i.e.*) a heavenly one? What was *Moses* but a *Nonconformist* to this World, *who refused to be called the Son of Pharoah's daughter*; *who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; *who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*? This is an eminent and high demonstration of his *Nonconformity* to the World. And so I might speak of the rest, who were all persons *of whom the world was not worthy*; *who obtained a good report from God*; and of whom we may say as the Apostle doth, (*Heb.* 11. 13.) *All these dyed in faith*: So

all these lived and dyed *Nonconformists* to the World. How highly and honourably doth the Lord (in Scripture) speak of these *Nonconformists?* No doubt but the men of their generation looked upon them as men singular, factious, humorous, as such that delighted to be unlike their Neighbours. But the Lord speaks of them as excellent, and precious, and such of whom the World was not worthy. Now compare these together, and see whether is better, To be well reported of by the World, or to be well reported of by God. What though the World account such *precise Fools*, if the Lord call such *the only wise in the world?* It is not whom the World commends, but whom God commends, that are praise-worthy indeed. *Moses*, in the blessing of *Joseph*, *Deut.* 33. 16. he wisheth to him *the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush.* To have the good-will and the good-word of God, is that that is most desirable in this life.

3. That you may be *Nonconformists* to this World, Be much in comparing together Rules and Patterns, Those of the Word, and those of the *World*. Take a view

view of both, and then consider these three things.

First, Which are most worthy your conformity.

Secondly, To which you are most obliged and engaged to conform.

Thirdly, By your conformity to which, you shall most benefit and advantage your selves.

First, Consider, whether the Rules and Examples of the *Word*, or of the *World*, be most worthy of your conformity. So consider,

1. What the World's Rules, and Commands, and Prescriptions are. You will find them to be all corrupt, erroneous, base, unclean, unholy. And you will find its Examples such likewise: The Rules it hath, by which it doth and acts things, and by which it judgeth of things, are all naught. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, saith *Job*? And how can a filthy and unclean World, prescribe Rules that are otherwise? Take a survey of its Rules; 1. For judging of things; It makes this one of its great Rules by which it

judgeth of things, Whether they be Good or Evil, by the suitableness or unsuitableness there is in them, to sinful flesh, and corrupt nature. I might name many other Rules of the like nature; but for brevity's sake I omit them. 2. For its Rules for practice, they are sinful and corrupt too. I shall name you some, (viz.) *To do as the most do*, is one Rule. *To do as the greatest do*, is another Rule. *To do as our Ancestors and Fore-fathers did*, (who lived in dark and corrupt times) is another Rule. *To do what respects our outward ease, and credit, and quiet, in this world, that we may sleep in a whole skin*, is another Rule. In a word, *To do what is good in our own eyes*; and *to do what tends to the pleasing and gratifying of our lusts*, is another Rule. I might name more; but let these suffice.

Next, for the World's Patterns and Examples, take a view of them: You will find them all corrupt and naught. If you look with a right eye upon them, you will find they all have ugly, base, sinful inscriptions on them; as of Prophaneness, Drunkenness, Swearing, Covetousness, Pride, Luxury, Uncleanness, and of all Ungodliness, Atheism, Indifferency in Religion,

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Lukewarmneſs, Denying the power of Godlineſs, *&c.* Such are the World's Examples. And ſo I have ſhew'd you what the World's Rules for judging and practice, are; and what its Patterns and Examples are, All naught.

2. Now I ſhall come to ſhew you, what the Rules and Examples of the Word are, that ſo upon comparing them together, you may ſee which are moſt worthy of your conformity. As for the Rules of the Word, they are holy, they are pure, they are perfect; ſo are all the Rules of the Word, both for judging of things, and for practice.

1. For the Rules preſcribed us in the Word, they are all pure: I might name many; but among others, take theſe three.

1. The VVord teacheth us to judg of things as God judgeth of them, whoſe judgment is according to truth; the judgment of the VVorld is according to appearance and corrupt phantaſie.

2. The Word teacheth us to judg of things as they have relation to the Soul. That, that is good which is good for the Soul, which tends to the making of

us more Holy and Heavenly.

3. The Word teacheth us to judg of things to be good or evil, as they relate to a man's future and eternal ſtate. So, thoſe things to be good, that concern a man's eternal well-being; and thoſe things to be evil, that relate to eternal miſery.

Thus for the Rules of judging of things.

Next, for the Rules of Practice, I ſhall name ſome (of many) to you; you will find them all holy and pure.

1. Is this; Doing what pleaſeth God, not what pleaſeth men. Pleaſing God, whom ever we diſpleaſe. This is a Rule in the Word, for practice; it telleth us, We ſhould not be the ſervants of men, to pleaſe their ſinful humours, and luſts, and fancies.

2. To do as the *beſt* do, and not as the *moſt* do: where, by [*beſt*] we mean not *the beſt of the Pariſh*, who are accounted ſo for their Riches, and Lands, and Poſſeſſions; but the *beſt* in reſpect of Godlineſs and Holineſs.

3. In all things we do, to prefer *ſuffering* before *ſinning*. To chuſe Affliction rather than Sin. It gives us to conſider, that the

the leaſt evil of Sin, hath more evil in it than the greateſt evil of Suffering.

4. In all we do, to reſpect more inward, than outward peace. To regard (moſt) peace in our own Spirits and Conſciences. To remember what the Martyr ſaid, *There were no Stocks to the Stocks of an evil Conſcience.* To have a care to preſerve the Bird in our boſome.

5. Doing good, and avoiding evil, though with diſadvantage to our ſelves, when the good concerns eternal life, and the diſadvantage only this life.

Thus for ſome of the Rules for practice.

Next, for the Patterns and Examples that the VVord of God holds out to us. You will find them all holy, having the Inſcriptions of Heaven and Holineſs on them. So it propounds to us, for our imitation, the Examples, (Firſt) Of Jeſus Chriſt. Secondly, Of Holy men, and ſuch as were Followers of Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Of Jeſus Chriſt. So it holds him out to us as our great Pattern to imitate. It ſhews us the ſteps of his Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Obedience, Holineſs, Heavenlineſs.

2. It holds out to us the Examples of Holy men, for our imitation, more famous

in their Generation than others, for their Faith, Piety, Patience, Holineſs, Zeal, *Heb.* 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promiſes.* Conſider, the Scripture propounds to us for our example, ſuch as inherit the Promiſes of God; the VVorld propounds ſuch as inherit the Threatnings of God. The Word propounds to us for our examples, ſuch as now are in Heaven. The VVorld propounds ſuch, who (for ought we know) are either in Hell, or in the road-way to Hell. Now, Chriſtians, I have given you a brief *ſpecimen* and view of the VVorld's Rules and Examples, and of thoſe of the VVord; and now compare them together, and judg which are moſt worthy of your conformity. Upon your comparing them together, you will find the reſult to be this.

1. That the Rules and Examples of the VVord are more high, and noble, and excellent, than thoſe of the VVorld: The VVorld's Rules and Examples are low and baſe; and a Chriſtian debaſeth himſelf in conforming to them; they are below a Chriſtian's Calling, they are below a Chriſtian's Spirit, they are below a Chriſtian's Profeſſion,

Profeſſion, they are below a Chriſtian's Hope and Expectation; and ſo muſt needs be too low for his conformity and imitation. Man is an excellent Creature, he was made a little lower than the Angels; ſo that (next to the Angels) he is the moſt noble of Creatures. And God, that gave Man a noble Being, gave him alſo a noble Rule to live and walk by. As God made not man to be his own End, neither did he make him to be his own Rule. From whom he received his Being, he was to receive his Rule. His Rule was, the Will and Law of his Creator; and herein ſtood his excellency, in conforming to that Rule. When man conformed to another Rule, he loſt his excellency. *God made man upright, but* (as *Solomon* ſaith) *they have found out many inventions.* So, God made Man excellent; but having found out other Rules to conform to, than thoſe of his Creator, they have loſt their excellency. There was a high and noble Rule, for a high and noble Creature; and that Rule is, the Rule of the Word, which contains the revealed Will of the Creator.

2. You will find this, upon comparing them together, That the Rules and Examples

ples of the Word are more pure and holy, than those of the World. Consider what is said of the Word of God, and what is said of the World: Of the Word of God the Scripture saith, *it is pure, very pure, as Gold tryed in the fire seven times.* Of the World it's said, that it is *sinful, evil*, and that *it lieth in wickedness.* Now, as the Word is, so are its Rules; and as the World is, so are its: A pure Word hath pure Rules; and an impure World must needs prescribe impure Rules. The higher things are, the purer they are. What is Purity, but a freeness from all Contagion, and touch of inferior things? That Gold is impure, that is mixed with dross; and that Face and Garment is defiled, that is spotted with dirt. Consider, things are pure *ex contactu superiorum*: the higher they are, and the more heavenly, the more pure. And things are impure *ex contactu inferiorum*; the lower things are, the more impure. Now, upon this account, the Rules and Precepts of the Word must needs be the purest, because they are most high, holy, heavenly. There is no *scoria*, no dross at all in them. And as for the Examples of the Word, they are holy and heavenly ones,

ones, that are propounded to us for our conformity and imitation.

Obj. It's true, some may here except against the Examples, and say, *What, was there no dross in them? Had not the best Saints their failings and corruptions? Were they perfectly pure, without stain or blemish?*

Ans. To this we answer: That the Examples and Patterns that the VVord of God holds out to us for our imitation, are (as I told you before) of two sorts: those

1. Of Jesus Christ.
2. Of Holy men.

1. The Example of Jesus Christ Now his Example is without, and beyond all exception; it is perfectly pure. He hath left us his steps to tread in; and upon view of them it wil never be found that he trod one step awry. *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* He made this challenge to his most bitter and observing Adversaries, *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* He was *Jesus Christ the righteous.*

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2. As for the Examples of Holy men, against whom the Objection most lieth, and of whom it must be confessed, that they had their impurities; yet concerning them, there is this to be said.

1. That though they had their impurities, yet they had their purity, (*i.e.*) something that was precious and excellent. They were Gold, though there were some dross mixed with it: so that (comparatively) we may say they were pure. The Examples of the World are altogether impure; they are all dross, and no Gold mixed with them. They are altogether corrupt, and have nothing of holiness and purity in them.

2. This is to be considered, That God in his Word, propounding to us the Examples of Holy men for our imitation, sets them out to us to be imitated by us in what was good, not what was evil in them. The holiest men were in some things but men: they had their black, as well as their bright side. Now the Scripture shews us their black side only for our caution; but their bright side only for our imitation. In the Scripture we see Saints in their Sins, and in their Graces; and it is in their Graces only that

that they are held forth to us as Patterns for our imitation. The great Apostle himself bids them to whom he writes, to *be followers of him, as he was of Christ.* We are to eye Christ as our chiefest Pattern, and to conform to the Examples of others, as they are conformable to Jesus Christ. Particular Saints, had their particular Graces and Excellencies. Thus *Abraham* was eminent for his Faith, *Job* for his Patience, *Moses* for his Meekness, *David* for his Zeal; and so for the rest. And in these, the Scripture propounds them to us as Patterns for our imitation, in their Excellencies, not in their Frailties. Thus the Objection is answered. And now consider what Rules and Examples are worthy of your imitation and conformity.

3*dly*, You will find this, upon comparing them together, That the Rules and Examples of the Word, have the greatest, and best, and highest approbation; and in this they exceed those of the World; this I shall shew you in some particulars.

1. They are approved of by God himself, who is the Best and Greatest. And needs must it be so, when such Rules are of his

own making, and such Examples of his own stamping. To these God puts his Seal of Approbation: but to those of the World, that of his dislike and condemnation.

2. They are those Rules and Examples that all that are godly approve of: by their dissenting from the other, they have testified their approbation of these. Read but the 119*th Psalm*, and see how highly *David* speaks forth his approbation of the Law, and Testimonies, and Precepts of God, and how he had chosen the way of God's Precepts. And this godly men have done under the greatest persecutions and afflictions; they have then testified their high approbation of the ways of God, and have not accepted of deliverance upon condition of complying with the sinful ways of the World: so you read of those sufferers of old, *Heb.* 11. what tortures they endured, and all upon the account of *Nonconformity* to the world.

3. They are those Rules and Examples that will one day be approved of by all, both good and bad. There is a day when even wicked men themselves will vote for them. It is not much to be regarded what wick-

wicked men now think or speak of them, while they are in their prosperity, and in the hot and eager pursuit of their Lusts. Alas! they are not now themselves; but there is a day when they will be in cool blood, when they wil be themselves, when they wil commend the ways of God, and the Examples of those holy ones they once condemned; and wil wish they had chosen the way of *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, &c. and not of *Cain*, and *Esau*, and *Ishmael*, and such like.

4. You will find this, upon comparing these Rules and Examples together, That those of the VVord are the safest to conform to. In that conformity, there is a safety for Eternity. In a conformity to those of the world, there is nothing but danger, they are liable to be condemned with the world; there is no safety in those ways, wherein there is no salvation to be found. They that live the life of the VVorld, must expect to perish with the VVorld. The *Psalmist* saith (Psal. 125. 5.) *As for such as turn aside to crooked paths, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*, (*i.e.*) God wil deal with such, as with wicked men. *Solomon* tells

us,

us, (Prov. 10. 9.) *He that walks uprightly walks surely.* It is a man's conformity to the Rules and Examples of the VVord, that speaks him Upright; and in that lieth his safety for Eternity.

5. Upon comparing them, you will find, That a conformity to the Rules and Examples of the VVord, is that that is most becoming Christians. VVhat can more become a Christian, than to conform to those Rules and Examples that are most Christian and holy.

1. It becomes not a Christian's Calling. He is called from the world, he is called out of the world, he is called to be unlike the world, he is called to be an Heir of another world, he is called to begin Heaven on Earth; to begin it here in Grace, and to enjoy it hereafter in Glory. Now Christians, How doth a conformity to the world agree and suit with your Calling? Doth it become a man to wallow in the Mire, because a Hog doth so?

2. It is unbecoming a Christian's Profession. As your Calling is, so is your Profession, holy. Do but reflect upon your Baptismal-Covenant; Is not the VVorld one of those things you promise to forsake,

and

and renounce? And if so, How can you conform to it? How can you that profess your selves to be the servants of Christ, be the servants of sinful men? How can you that profess your selves to be of the number of those that are redeemed from the world, comply with, and conform to the world?

3. Conformity to the world, is unbecoming the Spirit of a Christian. A Christian is to be one of an excellent and precious Spirit: And what hath an excellent Spirit to do with base and low Rules and Examples? Let me tell you, there is a holy Gallantry Christians should have, which should set them above such a conformity, with the greatest disdain and scorn. As it's said of *Caleb*, (*Numb.* 14.24.) He had *another Spirit*. What have holy Spirits to do with sinful Rules? And, What have heavenly Spirits to do with worldly and earthly Examples?

6. Upon comparing them together, you will find, That a Conformity to the Rules and Examples of the Word, is most *Consolative*. There is more comfort in conforming to the Word, than in conforming to the World. What comfort will the

thoughts of your conforming to a sinful wicked World, give you? when you come to lye on your last and dying-beds. What comfort will a conformity to the World reflect? Oh that men would consider what will give them peace at the last! Consider this you covetous Tradesmen, that use false Measures and Ballances, and that deal in false Wares: the saying is, *Leight Gains make an heavy Purse*; but take heed they make not an heavy and accusing Conscience in the end. It is the way of the World to get gain any way, but never consider what the issue will be, whether it will be comfort and peace at last. It was the saying of a worthy Judg of this Nation, to his Son when he was a dying, *Son, I leave you but a small Estate, but it was well gotten.* Oh that men could say so of their Estates (whether great or small), *That they were well gotten!* Let the cunning, covetous, worldly Tradesman, know, That he may as well rob a man in his Shop, with a mete-Yard, and a pair of Ballances in his hand as a Thief doth with Sword and Pistol on the Road; and although they are not alike arraigned at the Barr of Man's Tribunal yet they will be alike at the Barr of God's Tribu-

Tribunal. And as for you prophane ones, What comfort will the thoughts of your sinful pleasures, delights, and vanities, reflect when you come to dye? What pleasure will it then be to you, to remember the sinful jollities and debaucheries of a fore-passed life? Know this, that one hour spent in communion with God, will yeeld a man more solid comfort, than all the days a man hath spent in the Tents of wickedness. He said it, that had proved it, Psal. 84. 10. *A day in thy Courts, is better than a thousand*, &c. And let me tell you, A day spent in serving God, and conforming to his Will and Word, doing what is well-pleasing in his sight; will yeeld more comfort than a thousand spent in complying with, and conforming to the sinful fashions, pleasures, and examples of the World. Nay, What sad reflections will the thoughts of such a compliance cause? That proud Cardinal *Wolsey*, when he was cast out of the favour of his Prince, and was under the apprehension of approaching death, said, *If I had been as careful of serving and pleasing God, as I have been to serve and please my King; he had not now forsaken me in this my misery.*

And ere long men will wish, they had been as careful in conforming to the will of God revealed in his Word, as they have been to the wills of men, and ways of the World; and repent of it when its too late.

7. Upon comparing these together, you will find, That a conformity to the Rules and Examples of the Word, is a Christian's Wisdom; and that all *Conformists* to the World, will at the last be found but fools, as the Prophet (*Jer.*17. 11). saith, *He that getteth riches, and not by right, at his end shall be a fool.* Consider who in the end will be the veriest fools, *Conformists*, or *Nonconformists*, to the World? *Deut.* 4. When *Moses* had told the men of *Israel* of the Statutes of God, this is one Motive he makes use of to press them to an observation of them, *v.6. This will be your wisdom in the sight of the Nations.* Let me tell you, A *Conformity* to the Word, and a *Nonconformity* to the World, is a Christian's Wisdom. There is a day coming, when those who now for not conforming to the world, are accounted fools, will not only be pronounced *wise*, by the testimony of God, and Christ, and

and Angels, but also by those that now esteem and call them Fools. Let me tell you, What is the judgment and opinion of wicked men now concerning Holiness and Holy ones, will not always be their judgment; they will one day be of another mind. Now, indeed, *the wisdom of God is foolishness with the world*; when, indeed it is the *wisdom of the world that is foolishness with God.* In the Word of God, and the laws and rules which it prescribes, is seen the Wisdom of God: And those must needs be the wisest who conform to those Rules. Conforming to the World's Rules, is conforming to the World's Wisdom, which indeed is conforming to the World's Wickedness; and the wisest of such *Conformists* (except they repent) will ere long call themselves Fools to all Eternity.

Now, having compared all these togegether, tell me, Whether the Rules and Examples of the Word, or of the World, are most worthy of your conformity.

Thus much for the *First*.

Secondly, We come next to enquire, To which you are most obliged and enga-

ged to conform, To the Word of God, or to the World. And here I shall put this Question to you, viz. *To whom you owe most, whether to God, or the world?* So I must ask you two things;

1. Which hath done most for you?
2. Which can do most for you?

1. Which hath done most for you, God or the World? To whom owe you your Beings? Who created you, God or the world? Then tell me, to whom you owe your conformity? To whom owe you your Redemption? Who sent a Saviour into the world to dye for you; and by that death to purchase pardon, and peace, and reconciliation, and eternal salvation? To whom do you owe your lives? Who endued your souls with life, and hath hitherto held your souls in life? Of whose Mercies is it, that you have not ere this been consumed? Is it of the Lord's Mercy, or of the World's? From whom have you had protection and deliverance from dangers? Whose Angels are it that have pitch'd their Tents about you, God's, or the World's? From whom do you receive

all

all your bleſſings, of health, wealth, food, raiment? Is it from God, or the World? See, by this, to which you owe your conformity.

2. Conſider, which can do moſt for you. What can the world do for you? Doth it, or can it bid more for your conformity, than God doth? As *Saul* ſaid to his Courtiers, when he ſaw they were addicted to *David*'s Party, *Can the Son of Jeſſe give you Vineyards, or Olive-yards*, &c. So let me ask you, Can the world give you what God can? All that the world can do for you, doth but amount to what is temporal: But can it give you that which is eternal? Let me tell you, It is ſo far from doing that, that though it can give a man Honour, and Riches, yet it cannot give a man Contentment with them; much leſs can it give inward comfort, and peace, and aſſurance of Eternal Glory and Happineſs. All this, God bids for your conformity to him. And now ſee to which you moſt owe your conformity.

Thirdly, VVe are next to enquire, By which you will be moſt advantaged, whether by a conformity to God, or the

world? To this I have spoken largely before, when I shew'd you the Gain and Loss of *Conformity* and *Nonconformity* to the world. I shall only here put you upon the consideration of two things:

1. Which promiseth most.
2. Which threatneth most.

1. Which promiseth most, the *Word* or the *World:* Look over the promises of the *Word*, and tell me, whether the *World* can promise what God in his *Word* doth? Can it promise you, That by conforming to its Statutes and Laws, it shall be well with you and your children for ever? The world cannot promise you a long and happy life here; much less can it promise you eternal life and happiness hereafter.

2. Consider, which threatneth most: whose threatnings are most dreadful and terrible, those of the *Word*, or of the *World:* It's true, the world can thunder out threatnings against those that conform not to her: But tell me, Is that Thunder like, in terror, to that thunder we hear in the word, and the threatnings of it, against those that conform to a wicked world?

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The world can threaten with Bonds and Imprisonments, with Fire and Faggot: But God threatens with Hell, and everlasting burnings. As the Martyr told the Persecutor that threatned him with imprisonment, *Tu Carcerem, ille Gehennam:* Thou threatnest me with a Prison, but God threatens me with Hell. Remember the counsel of our Saviour; Matt. 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell.* And now you have heard all this, consider seriously of it, and tell me, whether the world is worthy your conformity; or, whether you are at all engaged to conform to the world; or, whether it will be any advantage to you to conform to the world, and not rather an infinite disadvantage?

And thus much for the Directions in general; and in these Directions are wrap'd up the Motives to move us to be *Nonconformists* to this world.

I shall now close all, with giving you some particular Directions, as further Means and Helps against Conformity to this world: and that briefly. 1. Con-

1. Consider your natural inclinations, and remember there is, by nature, in us a strong propensity to a conformity to the world. The world is a tempting, alluring, bewitching thing, apt to steal away our hearts, as *Absalom* did the hearts of the men of *Israel*. It will court, invite, and tempt; it will flatter and fawn, to gain a conformity; it hath tempting rules, tempting examples, tempting proffers, and much more, to draw men into a conformity to her. Now, Christians, you had need be watchful in this case, upon considering in what danger you are, to be deluded by the world; and that upon two accounts.

1. You live among those that are of the world, and therefore apt to be infected by them, as *Joseph* was by living in *Pharoah*'s Court; and *Peter*, by being in the High-Priest's Hall. Rivers partake of the nature of the soil through which they run; and it is a difficult thing to live in the world, and not to have a taste of the sins and corruptions of it.

2. Remember, you have (even the best) the remainders of corruption in you. There are the remainders of self, and so

ſo a love of worldly Credity, of outward Eaſe, of worldly Enjoyments; and theſe will be as a Byas to the Bowl, which will encline you toward the world, and a conformity to it.

2. That you may be *Nonconformiſts* to this world, Grow and encreaſe in love to Jeſus Chriſt. The more we love Jeſus Chriſt, the leſs we ſhall love the world. Any ſinful compliance with the world, argues either no love, or little love to Jeſus Chriſt. Love is the great worker of imitation, as Hatred is of averſation. Thoſe that love Jeſus Chriſt, will live to Jeſus Chriſt; and will be ſuch to whom the world is crucifi'd, and they unto the world: Such will ſay as St. *Paul* did, *To us to live, is Chriſt.* Jeſus Chriſt will be the *All* of their lives; all the Rule, and all the End of their living.

3. That you may be *Nonconformiſts* to the world, Meditate much of Chriſt's love to you; by that you will come to know, you owe all your conformity to Him. Right thoughts of this, will cauſe the world to be crucified to you, and you to the world; that neither the world ſhall

shall care for you, nor you for it.

4. Remember where Christ is: He is no more in this world, in respect of his corporal Presence; he is ascended into Heaven; he is there preparing Mansions for his: he hath left you steps on earth, in which you are to tread, and in which you are to follow him, if you desire to be where he is. So that, this considered, a conformity to the world can never consist with a Christian's aims of being with Christ hereafter, and to behold his glory. He now being in Heaven, is drawing the hearts and affections of those up to him, who are to be for ever with him.

5. Be much in searching the Scriptures: where you may view, as the Rules you are to walk by, so the examples you are to imitate; you will there have Glasses, by which you are to dress your selves: you will there find the pure example of him who was holy, undefiled, without spot and blemish, *viz.* Jesus Christ. You will there find the Examples of holy men, who were *Nonconformists* to the men of their generation.

6. Be much in prayer, That God would deliver you from this present evil world; That

That you may not be led into temptation, but may be delivered from the evil of it. Pray, that God would carry you above the world, and over all the good and evil of it, without being infected or hurt by it.

7. Remember what your condition in this world is. If you profeſs your ſelves Chriſtians, then you profeſs your ſelves to be ſtrangers and pilgrims in the world: and a conformity to this world, cannot conſiſt with ſuch a profeſſion. What have ſtrangers to do with a conformity to that place, through which they paſs only as travellers, and where they lodg only as pilgrims?

8. Remember, you are for Eternity, and that you live upon the borders of it. Think not ſo much where at preſent you are, as where you ſhortly muſt be. In every *Conformiſt* to this world, there is a forgetfulneſs of Eternity. How can thoſe that think of an Eternal world that is drawing near to them, and they to it, give up themſelves to a conformity to a world that is paſſing away? Remember, Eternity now calls *on* you, and will ſhortly call *for* you.

9. Encreaſe in Self-denyal. It is the ſelf-

self-denying Christian, that is the *Nonconforming* Christian to the world. Such a Christian will regard neither the world's favours, nor the world's frowns. Such a Christian will say as *Luther* did, *I despise both the world's favour, and the world's fury.* The self-denying Christian is one whom the world may both flatter and frown on; but he stands like an immovable Rock, not shaken by either.

10. Encrease in the mortification of your worldly lusts. Not mortifying these, hath reduced some to a conformity to the world, who seemed to have escaped the pollutions of it: This was the undoing of *Demas*, who forsook both his Ministry, and the fellowship of St. *Paul*, to embrace this present world; and (as some are of opinion) became an Idol-Priest at *Thessalonica*, upon the account of filthy lucre, and worldly gain.

11. Strengthen Faith, whereby you will be strengthened to overcome this present evil world. The Apostle tells us, (1 John 5.4.) *This is the victory whereby we overcome this world, even our faith.* It will make us couragious to out-face a sinful world. It is the evidence of things not seen,

ſeen, *Heb.* 11.1. and will work in us a contempt of the things that are ſeen. It will be the eye, by which, with *Moſes*, we ſhall ſee him that is Inviſible, and therby keep us from a conforming to a viſible world, upon greateſt temptations, though they be the pleaſures and promotions of a *Pharoah*'s Court. The more *faith*, the leſs *fear*; and it is baſe fear and cowardiſe, that often betrays to a ſinful compliance with, and conformity to the world. The more *believing* Chriſtians are, the leſs *conforming* they are to this world. To cloſe all, let me mind you of what the Lord ſpeaks to *Jeremiah*, and that I ſay to all Chriſtians concerning complying with, and conforming to the world, Jer. 15.19. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou ſhalt ſtand before me: And if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou ſhalt be as my mouth: Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.*

FINIS.

FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS

Thomas Wells
1691